

AMERICA

The Austrian Elections

PETER BERGER

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Land Policy in Japan

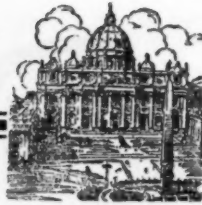
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COMMENT ON THE WEEK

Showdown on Strikes. Developments in Washington during the week just elapsed tend to support the belief that strikes and threatened strikes in several basic industries—oil, steel and automobiles—are headed for a showdown not between labor and management, but between management and the Federal Government. Contrary to the desires of President Truman, who hoped that labor and management would come to some agreement independently, this change in the strike picture is a logical outcome of the Government's wage and price policies. In his address on October 30, the President stated flatly that industry "can afford substantial wage increases without asking for any increase of prices." Accordingly labor has attached to its wage demands a condition that corporations may not use them as an excuse to seek higher prices from OPA. It was inevitable, then, that the question of profits would be a major point in the wage negotiations and, when the corporations refused to discuss profits, it was just as inevitable that no agreement would be reached. Now this controversy has been shifted to a higher level. After brief hearings, the fact-finding board appointed by Mr. Truman to investigate the dispute in the oil industry found that it could not report on all the relevant facts unless it ascertained the relationship between prices, wages and profits. In this stand Mr. Truman has been forced to back the board, since otherwise he would be denying the implications of his own wage and price policies. In the event that management, as seems probable, now refuses to produce its books, the general public may have an answer to the question AMERICA raised on December 8, namely, who is on strike, the workers or the corporations.

Relief Assured for 1946. With President Truman's signature, on December 18, of the authorization for the second \$1,350,000,000 for UNRRA, the destitute in Europe and the East have been assured that supplies will come to them in increased abundance during these crucial winter months. Throughout the hearings preceding the signature, testimony made quite clear the fact that UNRRA has sloughed off its initial bungling and embarrassments and is now doing a workmanlike job. Criticism will still, of course, be heard, as it would of any similarly huge project; some of this criticism will be justified and will call for minor adjustments and improvements. But of the fact that there is a momentous work to be done

and that UNRRA is doing it, such a comprehensive survey as that appearing in the *New York Times* for December 17 leaves little doubt. The Administration is to be thanked by the people of this country, as well as by the needy of the world, for having pushed the bill through before the Christmas recess and for having stripped it of all encumbering riders. Though relief has been used, lamentably, for political purposes, especially in Eastern Europe, UNRRA continues constitutionally unbound by ideological considerations. It would not be amiss to say our thanks at the Crib and to pray that the goods now made available will reach their destinations in time to avert part, at least, of the dread that would otherwise have attended this year's coming of the Prince of Peace.

Relief in the Far East. In view of the growing efficiency of UNRRA's operations in Europe, it is difficult to fathom the precise reason for the proposals being made in some quarters that future relief for China and the Far East be delegated to some organization, American-run, to be set up independently of UNRRA. The argument seems to be that since the United States is supplying most of the money anyway, we might as well take over the whole thing, thereby assuring ourselves

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the credit and obviating still more cleanly any political differences that might hamper relief. This seems to us to miss some vital points. First of all, if the United States is furnishing most of the money and supplies, it is simply because we have the most to give; war has spared us wonderfully, and mere gratitude would suggest generosity. Second, for any one nation, even the most prosperous and efficient nation, to take over all the relief in any one sector of the world would be to jettison the fine ideal of international cooperation, of which UNRRA is, to date, the most concrete manifestation. It is *not* the concern of any one nation that millions in other lands are starving; it is the concern of the world, and it was exactly to consolidate and make practical that concern that the United Nations agreed to succor the needy. If this form of international cooperation were in danger of breaking down, the plight of the starving would take priorities over the impractical ideal, but UNRRA is not breaking down. Let UNRRA, then, take care of the Far East, too. The lessons learned in working with other nations to feed the hungry can be translated into corollaries for working with other nations for peace.

Railroads Again. At least seven were killed and sixty-five injured in the crash of the "Sun Queen" and the "Silver Meteor" at Kollock, South Carolina, on December 16. This tragic mishap, along with the lesser train accidents of recent weeks, again draws attention to the imperative need of protecting our fast-traveling, closely scheduled passenger trains by every modern safety device and technique. The Sea Board Air Line crash might or might not have been prevented. Until an ICC report is made public we are not in a position to say. The same holds for the several troop-train accidents in the Chicago area and the recent collision at Lula, Georgia, in which three died. One thing, however, is clear. All the railroad plans for faster, more frequent through trains are only going to result in greater disasters unless corresponding steps are taken to ensure passenger safety. For the present, indeed, railroads are handicapped by the heavier civilian travel, diversion of equipment to troop movements and a shortage of skilled personnel. But plans for the immediate future must include ways and means whereby the railroads will better satisfy their responsibility to the public and eliminate avoidable hazards (AMERICA, December 1, p. 240). Among the steps which can and should be taken are: 1) replacing of the time-table train-order system by central tower control on through passenger lines; 2) installation of block signals and interlocking

systems on such lines; 3) introduction of two-way radio communication, and 4) use of new-style brakes and roller-bearings on all fast trains (freights included) as soon as possible. This is a matter for Federal action, *before* accidents occur.

Intervention in Spain. The notes sent by the French Government to England and the United States, proposing consultations with a view to ending diplomatic relations with the Franco Government, are loaded with dynamite, as London and Washington know very well. Although in certain circumstances a nation is justified in interfering in the internal affairs of another nation, this moral principle has never been incorporated, as a guiding rule, into American foreign policy. Before taking hasty action with respect to Spain, we ought to make sure that we can intervene without starting a civil war which might develop into another world war. We ought, also, to consider this step not as an isolated incident but as an integral part of a consistent foreign policy. If we are to interfere in Spain on ideological grounds, are we prepared to embark on crusades against other countries whose ideas of government are at variance with our own? "And where," as the New York Times said editorially on December 20, "are we then supposed to stop?" Furthermore, if, acting in concert with France and Britain, we bring about the downfall of the Franco regime, what government are we prepared to put in its place? The so-called Republican Government-in-Exile, now functioning in Mexico City? Any attempt to place this group in power would certainly result in bloody revolution, which, according to former Ambassador Carleton J. H. Hayes, the majority of Spaniards, both Right and Left, want at all costs to avoid. We trust that the Truman Administration will not be stampeded into setting a very dangerous precedent, one that might easily involve us with other dictatorships, including Soviet Russia.

Iranian Incident. There was not much to discuss about Iran when the Foreign Ministers gathered last week at Moscow. The Azerbaijan rebels had already proclaimed their autonomy, while the Moscow radio continued its function of serving as the chief source of information of events in that northern section of Iran. The Conference at Moscow was faced with a *fait accompli*. But the lessons of this maneuver have become very clear, and in the end it may not pay the Soviet Union to have focused so sharply the future issues that will confront the United Nations. While no overt act by the Red Army was reported during the

Azerbaijan separatist movement, it is recognized that the whole affair was a piece of intervention by the USSR in the internal affairs of Iran, terminating in the violation of that country's territorial integrity. When the United Nations Assembly meets in full (deliberative) session next summer, the Iranian situation will conceivably have gone out of the headlines. (Events seem to show that the same strategy will be used against Turkey.) It may well be that the first test of the power of the United Nations General Assembly, the "town meeting of the world," will take place over Russia's alleged violation of the principles of the United Nations. Countries which have up to now refrained from commenting on the Iranian intervention will have full opportunity to bring to bear the full pressure of world opinion. Today Iran can protest only to the big Three. Tomorrow Iran can raise this issue before the bar of world opinion. And to its accusations Russia can *not*, in this instance, interpose a veto.

State Shinto Forbidden. General Douglas MacArthur's sweeping directive does away with Shinto as a state-supported religion. It decrees freedom for all religious denominations in Japan. In 1899 the Japanese government, while banning all religious instruction in schools, declared that State Shinto was not a religion and made its teaching compulsory. This teaching simply meant indoctrination in hypernationalism. It is easy to see that the effect of reducing this powerful government agency to private rank is decisive for the status of religious freedom in Japan. No longer must a person practise Shinto in order to be counted as a thoroughly loyal and patriotic Japanese. The Japanese can learn to weigh the claims for allegiance that the different religions propose to him—Shinto simply as a traditional native religion; Buddhism, Christianity, in its various presentations, on their own evidence, and not in the light of what they may or may not cost him in the matter of patriotic standing, liberty or life itself. A prominent Protestant missionary, the Rev. Luman J. Shafer, chairman of the Japan Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, recently hailed Japan's liberation from its internal "iron ring of propaganda and oppression" as the dawn of a new day for Christianity; and this is true for Catholics as well as Protestants. Yet the effect of the MacArthur directive is not to favor Christianity or any other one belief. It is simply to establish the normal political and social conditions in which the truth can be heard and practised, and this, in the circumstances, is precisely what Christianity asks for.

Agriculture in the International Era. Speaking at the annual U. S. Department of Agriculture Outlook Conference dinner on December 5, Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson laid down the broad lines of our farm policy as he sees it. The Secretary first pointed out that, in view of their present prosperity, now is the time for farmers to coordinate their efforts and integrate agriculture with the national economy. This, he added, implies recognition of the close interrelation between agricultural prosperity and full industrial production and employment. The most significant statement of the speech, however, was the frank avowal that the time has come for American agriculture to take a world outlook and not merely shape its policies toward an elusive domestic prosperity. Strictly controlled production and high tariff barriers aimed in the past at improving the farmers lot. Their success is dubious, and they have kept the world from profiting by our efficiency and productive power. Said Mr. Anderson:

... only two main roads lie before us. One leads to a highly defensive, closed economy. The other heads towards an aggressive, coordinated enlargement of world production and consumption, with great increases in efficiency. The first implies trade barriers, restrictions, retaliatory action between nations, tight government control within each nation. The second implies understanding between nations, positive common action to produce more and distribute it better, and overall coordination to prevent recurrent gluts and shortages. This latter course . . . is the kind that looks outward toward an economy of abundance; not inward toward scarcity.

We can be grateful for Mr. Anderson's international outlook. It is in full accord with the general view taken at the Quebec meeting (AMERICA, November 3, p. 114) of the Food and Agricultural Organization.

UNO in U. S. A. The United States will get the permanent headquarters of the United Nations. This was the decision reached by the Preparatory Commission. In a subsequent decision the Commission left the Assembly itself to pick the specific geographical location within the United States. Top chances are conceded to San Francisco and Boston, with the former city gradually losing ground on account of its distance. It is clear that no location in the southern States will be chosen. Delegates in London have pointed out that United Nations delegates from Liberia and Ethiopia would find themselves constantly embarrassed by racial-separation customs, and the delegation from India expressed concern over racial discrimination in Washington, D. C. The decision to settle in the United States was made in spite of considerable

pressure by Great Britain, France and the Netherlands on behalf of a seat in Europe. These delegations said that the great problem was Europe, and that to have the seat in Europe would decidedly facilitate the solution of European issues. The Soviet Union, however, consistently spoke for the United States. The final decision to go westward is interpreted symbolically as signifying that the center of the world has gone from Europe. Walter Lippmann has expressed his belief that the Soviet stand was in effect a testimony of confidence in the United States. He pointed out that Russia has more to fear from the United States without the United Nations than as a Member. It remains to be seen what effect placing the seat in this country will exert upon American opinion of Europe's crises. Despite some British fears about an American swing towards isolationism, the presence of the UNO on American soil may well sustain and strengthen America's interest and power in international affairs.

Chinese Communists. Bishop Yu-pin, Vicar Apostolic of Nanking, declared in an interview with Father Thomas Brack, of the Maryknoll Fathers in Chungking, that he was "inclined to think" that Ambassador Hurley's "interpretation of the Chinese Communists' intentions is accurate." The interview was reported by N.C.W.C. *News Service*, December 17. Today, said the Bishop, the Communists dominate six provinces, comprising an area of over a million square miles and containing almost a fourth of China's population. They are not mere agrarian reformers, he added, but "the same real Communists as we have elsewhere in the world." Their demands may be summarized in six points:

1. Communist governors for the Provinces of Jehol, Chahar, Suiyuan, Hopei and Shantung.
2. Communist troops to be stationed in these Provinces.
3. The Communist army should maintain at least 17 fully equipped divisions.
4. Communist vice-mayors for Peiping, Tientsin, Shanghai, Tsingtao, Hankow, Amoy and Canton.
5. A coalition government for China, with posts divided between Communists and the Kuomintang.
6. One-third of the delegates to the forthcoming People's Congress to be Communists.

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Asked about freedom of the press in China, the Bishop pointed to the fact that there is a Communist daily in Chungking, but no Government or Kuomintang paper in the Communist area. Chiang Kai-shek's government, he said, had made many drastic concessions, but insists that there must be "one government with all military forces under one supreme command."

Law Above Emotion. The news-reels lately have been showing a scene that is, we hope, typical of practical democracy. General Stillwell, who certainly saw enough of Japanese bad qualities to be somewhat excusable if he had been unwilling to have anything to do with the ceremony, is shown pinning a posthumous Congressional Medal on the sister of a Nisei, an American-born Japanese GI killed in action in Italy. This just consideration of an individual's rights and dignity, independent of color, race or creed, has been further highlighted by two events. An American officer who spent three years in a Japanese prison after the infamous Bataan "Death March," has been dropped as a member of the war-crimes commission engaged in trying the first Japanese war criminal suspect in Tokyo. The commission judged that the officer would be too prejudiced to be of material assistance in a fair trial. On an even higher plane, the United States Supreme Court, on December 17, granted a stay of execution to Lieut. Gen. Yamashita, the "Tiger of Malaya," on his appeal for retrial before the American Military Commission. These are all heartening indications that justice toward the Japanese is not being stampeded by emotion. This temperate objectivity may displease some who clamor for swift retribution, but it is the only sure way of bringing home to the guilty and to their more or less willing accomplices the dispassionate but inevitable working out of justice.

Sister Rose de Lima. Catholic international circles lost a great pioneer when death claimed Sister Rose de Lima, of the Sisters of Charity, at the age of 74 on December 16. Sister Rose was a former vice-president of the Catholic Association for International Peace, and was founder of the Atlantic States Division of the Catholic Students Federation for International Peace. Holding the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts, Doctor of Philosophy and Bachelor of Laws, she was the first nun to attend the International Lawyers Conference at Ann Arbor, Michigan. At the time of her death she was head of the Department of Political Science in St. Elizabeth's College, Convent Station, N. J. May she rest in peace.

WASHINGTON FRONT

Congress went home for its vacation and left behind it in Washington a general sense of discouragement and disappointment; and Washington is waiting somewhat eagerly to see if it finds the same feeling back home. There are also rumors that, whether it does or not, the President is going to help things along with a fireside chat.

If he does, he will probably remind the country that very little of his legislative program, proposed at the beginning of the session, has been as much as considered. UNRRA, it is true, got part of its money; the President got authorization for reorganization, more than he hoped for; big industry got excess-profits tax reductions, and can afford to ride out any and all strikes.

But the Pearl Harbor investigation turned into a free-for-all political match (which it was from the beginning); full-employment and unemployment-compensation legislation bogged down in a mess of bargaining; the fact-finding proposal got nowhere; and a dozen serious problems clamored for solutions, with Congress offering none.

Not that Congress was the only one to blame for the general frustration. There was little leadership apparent anywhere. Not much, if any, came from the White House, and that is not to be wondered at. Anybody with the explosive combination of the atomic bomb and Russia on his hands would have plenty to think of.

To take one instance, however, in domestic affairs, one question that has to be settled before the fact-finding proposal in industrial disputes can be made practical: shall wages be tied to prices and costs? Even some labor men say no; John Lewis is especially vehement against it, says it goes contrary to all proper labor strategy, that it is all right on a rising market, but what about when depression comes? Lewis was always for high wages no matter where the market for coal was.

But that is only one example of an unsolved problem. At present the Administration seems afraid to face it, is backing into it in the oil-workers' case, and soon we may be in a planned economy without having planned it at all.

No plan is apparent on the horizon of foreign affairs either, unless Secretary Byrnes took one with him when he disappeared behind the impenetrable Russian wall. The only plan Washington can see is that, having lost out definitively on Poland and the Balkans, we are now preparing to fight rearguard actions on Germany, Iran, China and Japan, with defensive positions farther back. Altogether a pretty unhappy Christmas for politicians and statesmen.

WILFRID PARSONS

UNDERSCORINGS

Pope Pius XII, according to *Religious News Service*, plans to ride across Rome on Christmas Day, as he did last year, to distribute gifts in person to needy children.

► Msgr. Lawrence J. Shehan, former Pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Washington, was consecrated Titular Bishop of Lydda and Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore and Washington on December 12. The other Auxiliary, Bishop McNamara, was formerly a curate in St. Patrick's.

► The Russian Orthodox Church in the U. S. has postponed for two years (until the next meeting of the Council of Bishops in 1947) proposals for reunion with the Orthodox Church in Russia. "The American and Canadian Orthodox Bishops prefer a free, democratic, independent American Church," said Metropolitan Theophilus, "until convinced that the Moscow Church is free of political domination."

► "We had to lose the war," said Archbishop Groeber of Freiburg im Breisgau, according to N.C.W.C. *News Service*, "for the whole traditional civilization in all Europe would have suffered a terrible catastrophe had victory been on our side." These words occur in a pastoral addressed by the Archbishop to the Catholics of Constance.

► Father Joseph Murphy, S.S.J., was killed in a fire which destroyed the St. Joseph Industrial School for Negro Boys at Clayton, Del., Dec. 19. Father Murphy had spent a long and fruitful life in the field of Negro education.

► The Hierarchy of France will oppose, by every means in their power, attempts to embody atheistic and materialistic philosophies in the new constitution now being drafted. This warning was contained in a report on religious and educational issues likely to arise under the new constitution.

► The Council for Religion in Life, inter-faith student organization at the University of North Carolina, has adopted a resolution "heartily concurring in the action taken by the Student Legislative Assembly at Raleigh to invite Negro college representatives at next year's assembly."

► Father Leo A. Cullum, of the New York Province of the Society of Jesus, has been appointed Superior of the Jesuit missions in the Philippines. He was Rector of the Seminary of San José in Manila, a post he occupied all during the war.

► On December 19 Archbishop Martínez of Mexico City dedicated a beautiful little Catholic chapel in the *Infantillo*, Mexico's prize children's hospital, Government built, owned and operated, though privately supported.

C. K.

AUSTRIA AFTER THE ELECTIONS

PETER BERGER

Amid the ruins left by the war, starving and freezing but calmly and in disciplined fashion, the Austrian people elected their first parliament after seven years of foreign domination. They gave, on November 25, 1945, a majority to the Austrian People's Party, which represents Catholic tradition and Christian democracy in Austria. They elected a powerful Socialist minority but rejected Communism, which won only a few seats in the representative body.

These elections proved the unshakable force of the Catholic social idea in a country which has been Catholic throughout its history and remains Catholic in its deepest roots. Beyond that, the principal electoral figures made it clear that that country had returned, on the whole, to the political configuration of the first democratic republic between 1919 and 1933. In the five national elections of those fourteen years, the relative strengths of the two great political groups—the Christian Social Party and the Social Democratic Party—differed but little. The share of the first in the total vote kept between 36 and 45 per cent; that of the latter, between 36 and 40 per cent. Of the remaining votes, 11 to 18 per cent fell to Pan-German nationalistic groups.

In the most recent elections the Austrian People's Party—which now takes the place of the Christian Social Party—received 1,574,587 votes and 85 of the 165 mandates to the national parliament. It is the first time since the establishment of the republican regime in Austria that one party attained an absolute majority in the legislature. The Socialists got 1,420,862 votes and 76 mandates; the Communists, 175,671 votes and 4 mandates. The disappearance of Pan-German parties in Austria, as a consequence of the breakdown of the Great German Reich, made it possible for the People's Party, as well as for the Socialist Party, to draw from the numbers formerly held by the Pan-Germans. The People's Party prevailed over the Socialists and accordingly reached the majority.

The total vote was about half a million below that of the last general elections in 1930. This was partly due to the absence of men who had been forced into the German Army and who are still prisoners of war, partly to the disfranchising of citizens who had been affiliated with National Socialist organizations. But there are no special reasons to assume that the inclusion of these votes

would have substantially affected the result of the elections. Homecoming soldiers probably would vote according to their social environment—industrial workers prevailing Socialist; the others, People's Party. As for the fanatical Nazis, they may swing to the extreme Left as well as support the Right.

The main reason why the Christian forces in Austria, now united in the People's Party, could withstand the Red flood is that they—and not the Marxists—were the core of the Resistance against foreign domination. Whatever the individual opinion as to the Dollfuss and Schuschnigg regimes of the "Patriotic Front" may be, it was their followers who defended Austria heroically against the assault of National Socialist Germany between 1933 and 1938. Dollfuss and Schuschnigg came from the Christian Social party, and the members of this party were the bulk of the Patriotic Front. Dollfuss was murdered by the Nazis; Schuschnigg and many of his followers paid for their resistance in the German concentration camps. Among the latter was Leopold Figl, who later was a leader of the Austrian Underground, and is now Austria's Chancellor.

Although the vote on November 25 took place in freedom and order, the Austrian People's Party was somewhat limited in its freedom of action before election day by certain Allied occupation policies. Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg and the Mayor of Vienna, Richard Schmitz, have been kept in Italy since their release from a Nazi concentration camp last Spring. In the Provinces of Upper Austria and Salzburg, these policies nearly resulted in a boycott of the elections on the part of the dominant Catholic party because the U. S. occupation authorities excluded followers of Schuschnigg and Dollfuss from public offices. Socialist mayors were appointed, and the peasants were told that they would not get any economic concessions unless they elected Socialists. The result of this policy, however, was, as the correspondent of a leading New York paper noted, ill-humoredly, that

... political opinion in Austria's provinces, except for isolated industrial centers, was of the traditional, conservative, clerical shape of the past. The *Volkspartei* (People's Party) piled up huge majorities which the Socialists were unable to whittle down sufficiently in Vienna and the other cities.

No similar interference has been heard of from the British, French and Soviet zones.

The Austrian Socialists, who came back into the parliament with impressive strength, gained a victory against the extreme Left. It was owing, in large measure, to the steadfastness of the Socialists that the Communists were defeated. There

were also inner reasons of national feeling. The Communists must appear to the Austrian workers as the vanguard of foreign national interests. Their spiritual link with Moscow is only one ground for this feeling. The Austrian workers are no less alarmed than other sections of the population about the cruel expulsion of the German-speaking minority in Czecho-Slovakia, who were Austrian rather than German, and about Marshal Tito's aspirations toward parts of the Province of Carinthia. The natural reaction against the Pan-Slavist danger helped the Socialists in their success over the Communists, of whom a number had fought under Tito.

The former Austrian Social Democrats (they call themselves plainly the "Socialist Party" now) are, however, no "Liberals," as some editorial writers try to tell the American public. They march under the Red Flag; they have been genuine Marxists always, professing the dogmas of historic materialism and the class struggle. The "Austro-Marxists" have been even more radical than most of Europe's Socialist parties. As for religion, the Social Democrats of the first republic fostered the "Freethinker" movement within their party, which tried to promote large-scale defection from the Church. The Social Democrats had been emulating, from 1918 on, the "bourgeois" Pan-Germans by their fervent partisanship for the *Anschluss*, which they considered as a guarantee against the return of a Catholic Habsburg monarchy.

At least with regard to *Anschluss*, the renewed Austrian Socialist party has taken a decisive turn. When the veteran Socialist leader, Dr. Karl Renner, formed a provisional Austrian government in agreement with the Red Army last Spring, he had to recognize not only the expressed will of the victorious great Powers to establish a free and independent Austria, but the state of mind of the Austrian people themselves. After the experience of the last seven years, no party with Pan-German-Prussian leanings is possible in Austria. Dr. Renner found his way back to the views of his younger years, when he had been a defender of multi-racial Old Austria against bourgeois racism. His literary works of the time received the applause of many conservative Catholics.

A lasting conversion of the Socialists to the Austrian national idea will mean an immense effect for the living force of the nation. Until this time the champions of the Austrian national idea were exclusively to be found on the Right. No essential differences between the foreign policy of the People's Party and that of the Socialist Party are visible at present. According to Dr.

Renner, Austria is "to be a center around which the currents of Europe revolve and mingle." Herr Figl expressed nearly the same thing when he said: Austria is oriented toward the West but she wants "to be a bridge between the West and the East."

The necessary efforts of the present day are directed toward the battle against destitution and starvation, toward the rebuilding of the destroyed railways and cities of Austria. The Austrian people are exposed to worse suffering than most parts of Europe. A diet of 700 calories a day in certain parts of Austria means less than half of even the present German average. The misery of the country is increased by division into four separate occupation zones. The removal of these zones and the substantial reduction of the Allied occupation forces in Austria were recently asked by Herr Figl and now have the support of at least part of the occupying Powers. When a sufficient Austrian police force has been built up, no further justification for foreign occupation will exist. Austria was no aggressor state, but the first victim of Hitlerite aggression. Austria's basic importance for the peace was recognized by the great Powers in the Moscow Declaration of 1943. It is to be hoped that reciprocal fear and jealousy will not indefinitely postpone effective aid of the Powers to the Austrian people who, now as before, keep the flag of Christianity flying in the heart of Western civilization.

PUERTO RICO AND THE LANGUAGE QUESTION

RICHARD PATTEE

Senator Millard Tydings recently introduced into Congress once again his bill for independence for Puerto Rico. Over a period of years the Senator has made this gesture in session after session. This time it was quite evidently more serious than at any time in the past. The bill was more carefully drawn, the economic guarantees more scrupulously phrased and the intent and purpose more clearly aimed at giving the island a decent opportunity, if it so desired, to set out as an independent republic. The support for the Tydings Bill got off to an excellent start. At the present time it has become bogged down through the presentation of another measure which has aroused some discussion in the United States, aimed at giving Puerto Rico a plebiscite. According to this latter proposal, the Puerto Rican people may vote for independence, statehood or a form of commonwealth. In each case the conditions and guarantees are set

forth. The extraordinary feature of this measure, which has yet to be considered by the Congress, is that the legislative body of the United States commits itself *a priori* to abide by the results of the plebiscite.

It is doubtful if there is any public issue involving the United States which has been so consistently distorted and misrepresented. Much of the confusion rests basically on the question of language. Nothing is more extraordinary than to observe down through the years the constant preoccupation of members of Congress, of those in charge of the Division of Insular Affairs of the Department of the Interior and even those who direct the public instruction of the island, with the increase of English-language instruction in the island, as the *sine qua non* of progress and happiness. It is high time that this language question be put exactly where it belongs; and that is definitely outside of politics or the jurisdiction of Congress. Nothing touches the Puerto Rican people quite so much as this business of urging English so violently upon them. Nothing annoys and irritates them so much as to be told that unless English is spread far and wide on a much greater scale than at the present time, self-government is still a long way off. The question of English has become quite simply the measuring-rod for judging the Puerto Rican question; and this, let it be said, is a fundamental and profound error.

In the first place, the question ought not to exist at all. Once, some years ago, the Commissioner of Public Instruction was informed by a letter signed by the late President Roosevelt that super-emphasis must be given to English instruction. This was made one of the great items in the expansion of education. Ever since then, in every Congressional hearing, in every Congressional visitation to the island (and they are frequent) in discourses in and out of Congress, the same note is struck over and over again—that the teaching of English in Puerto Rico is the key, the Open Sesame to the solution of almost everything from hunger to elephantiasis and hookworm.

No Governor, no Commissioner of Public Instruction, no public official who at all depends on Washington would have the ghost of a chance of prolonged survival were he to take this question by the horns and speak out clearly and honestly and say that it is time that this nonsense be stopped and the language question put exactly where it belongs. It has been argued for so many years that to know English is to enjoy prosperity, opportunity and a bright future that people have come to believe it. The knowledge of English has been bound up with democracy and progress in

political institutions. Quotations could be produced by the ream to indicate how often the assertion has been advanced that with English go a better and keener appreciation of the democratic way of life as well as a happier outlook on life.

The falsity of this is apparent. The English language is not the sole tongue in which decent political doctrines can be expressed. There is no reason in the world to assume that democratic principles cannot be expressed just as well in any other language: in Spanish, Malayan, Hottentot or Afrikaans. It is not the language that counts but the consciousness of the people who practise or fail to practise those particular doctrines. English as a tongue is certainly not surrounded by any such mystical value. It is absurd to set it up as a fetish and worship it as some sort of an idol. It gives great offense to the Puerto Ricans themselves, who are perfectly aware that in their own vernacular the ideas contained in the American institutions can be expressed quite adequately.

The attitude of the Americans who have had to deal with the issue seems to spring from the false idea that to govern a territory, or even to hold it within the jurisdiction of the United States, linguistic uniformity is indispensable. True enough, we have had no experience on any appreciable scale in governing peoples who speak another language and prefer to cling to that language. In most cases, as in Hawaii and the Philippines, the heterogeneity of the populations makes English the logical *lingua franca*. In Alaska, the Virgin Islands and the Canal Zone there is no question of another language at all. In Guam and Samoa, the matter is too insignificant to become a real problem.

Puerto Rico is one of the very few areas in the world whose population is overwhelmingly of European extraction and is fully possessed of a European language and culture under the rule of another people of European background and tradition. Malta and Cyprus are almost the only other examples of a similar state of affairs in the colonial world today. Unfortunately we have never learned to avoid the most obvious forms of friction; and among these is want of respect for the integrity of language. The United States has never learned that a hands-off policy in the matter of language pays enormous dividends in the long run. Why is it that after fifty years of experimenting, of trial and error and of the clear failure of English to displace or even make serious inroads on Spanish in the island, we still persist in confusing political future, status, progress and democracy with language? Why have we not learned from the experience of the British in the Union of

South Africa and Canada, where the autonomy of language has been one of the bulwarks against secession and disunion? How easy it would be to drop the whole language question, so artificially fomented, and state clearly that henceforth the Puerto Rican people, no matter whether they become independent or are given Statehood, may use the Spanish language as they please, in all forms of instruction and without reference to the opinions of members of the United States Senate? Our Senators probably know a great deal about a great many things; but they rarely know anything at all about the subtleties of primary instruction in two languages or the psychological problems posed by bilingual instruction. The deplorable fact is that this whole issue has become more and more involved in politics.

It is no exaggeration to say that for many years insistence on English was almost a test of patriotism. Those who bellowed the most vehemently for increased English instruction were labeled the most ardent pro-Americans. Those who professed to see considerable advantage in letting Puerto Rico go its own way linguistically were branded as little short of subversive influences. It would be amusing, no doubt, to a French Canadian or to a South African to observe the almost primitive simplicity of mind with which the question has been approached. Nor has it ever occurred to anyone that the Irish in largely losing their own language and in acquiring that of the conqueror did not become thereby loyal and patriotic Britishers. The experience of Europe has been unanimous that if a nation respects the linguistic autonomy of a people over whom it rules, and allows them the fullest and most complete development in their language, a colonial system becomes more bearable, even if not justified.

It is time that the United States thought in terms of the twentieth century on this matter. Vast sums of money have been spent on English instruction. Today Puerto Rico does not speak English. Probably fewer university students are able to use the language than twenty years ago. English has become almost odious and has acquired a definitely political connotation. The fact that it is the language of peoples other than the Americans makes no difference. Colonialism and English are synonymous terms. It must be plain that if in fifty years English has progressed only among those who need it, then something must be wrong in raising the question as the basic issue in the consideration of Puerto Rico's future. As has been indicated, this problem exists merely because it has been made to exist. Its importance is very much less than one would suppose from even a

desultory examination of our Congressional debates.

The great majority of Puerto Ricans who go to school at all never get beyond the early grades. The number who migrate is negligible. The number who enter the University for professional training is equally small. Those who engage in business involving American contacts are an infinitesimal proportion of the whole population. To argue for an entire system of English instruction for all the people, simply because five per cent may later need the language, is to proceed on a very flimsy basis. Puerto Rico needs an infinitude of other things besides English. The island needs a solution of its political uncertainty and an end of the archaic and anachronistic present order. It needs to find its place in the world among other small nations. It cannot be treated forever as a problem child, an undesirable foundling or a retarded nationality. One of the first things that ought to be done is to eliminate once and for all the whole smokescreen of the English-language debate and recognize that this is a problem of very little importance. The United States should take a leaf from the book of other Powers with vaster experience and more insight, and leave entirely and absolutely to local determination the question of language in all its ramifications. The shelving of this question would remove one red herring from the path of the Puerto Rican question. It would restore a greater placidity to Puerto Rican life. It would make important things important and remove trivialities that now clutter up the landscape. It would remove definitely the most constant source of petty annoyance, which is the unceasing debate as to how much English should be taught, and how patriotic a Puerto Rican can be if his grammar is incorrect or his vocabulary limited.

Language in most cases is a convenience. The United States has no linguistic patriotism. The English language is not a cult. The Spanish-speaking peoples have a much stronger sense of the linking of nationality to language and the heritage that it represents. The Puerto Ricans in particular, deprived of political self-determination, colonial in institutions and atmosphere, cling to the Spanish vernacular with singular tenacity, precisely as a defense mechanism and as the outward evidence of a collective personality. The United States would achieve much if it were to concede this complete autonomy, and abandon the idea that by some strange and esoteric process the acquisition of a smattering of badly mangled English makes a man a true democrat, an honest voter, a loyal neighbor and a decent husband.

HOW AUSTRALIA WAS SAVED

CONRAD H. LANZA

After the entry of the United States into World War II, the first military campaign undertaken was to save Australia.

Australia, as a part of the British Empire, had associated itself with the promise made by Prime Minister Winston Churchill in August, 1941, that if Japan should attack the United States, the British Empire "within the hour" would march to its aid. That the United States assumed a similar obligation to come to the aid of British territories or Dominions, should they be attacked, has never been admitted. That the United States had a moral obligation to do so, when the crisis came, was well recognized and promptly acted upon.

The general opinion of the Allied nations was that war with Japan would not be serious. They had taken certain measures which they believed would enable them to win a war without much real fighting.

Oil and food were to be found in quantities ample for Japan's use in the Dutch Indies. Iron was obtainable in the Philippines as well as in China. It seemed that, if Japan decided on war, she would be forced to attempt to seize the Dutch Indies and the Philippines. That she might try to attack both at the same time was possible, but the general opinion was that she would not, but would try action against the Dutch islands first.

To meet this situation the Allies undertook to reinforce the threatened areas. Both the United States and the British sent strong detachments of troops to Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines. As no one believed that Australia was in danger, her troops went to Singapore. Canadians went to Hong Kong, while the United States naturally looked after the Philippines.

There was no intention of an offensive against Japan, at least until after the war with Germany was over. All that was believed necessary was to withstand an onslaught and hold on until Japan's resources became exhausted.

Whether Japan chose to attack Hong Kong, the Philippines or the Dutch Indies, her invasion fleets would pass through the South China sea. When this occurred, out would come the American bombers from the Philippines, British bombers from Hong Kong, and Dutch, Australian and British bombers from Borneo and Malaya. The invasion fleets would be attacked from the right, from the left and from the front. Few were expected to get by. What fragments escaped the

concentrated air attacks would be too weak to defeat the garrisons of the Americans, British and Dutch. The last blow would be the decisive one. This would be given by the American fleet. It was to be held in Hawaii until after the air forces had weakened the Japanese fleet by concentric attacks from three directions.

So far as Australia was concerned, no special precautions were taken in the home country. The war was not expected even to come near it.

What had not been foreseen was the violence and extent of the Japanese offensives. The air attack on Pearl Harbor temporarily put out of commission the American fleet, which had been counted upon to deal the death blow to the Japanese Navy.

By sharp air blows, the American air fleets in the Philippines were destroyed within forty-eight hours, being caught off-guard while parked on open fields. Hong Kong, Singapore and the Philippines were all attacked at once, and fell one after another. Hong Kong fell by Christmas of 1941; Singapore, which had been supposed impregnable, by February 15, 1942. At that date the Philippines had been overrun by the Japanese, excepting the fortress of Corregidor and an adjacent beachhead on Bataan. It was clear that these could not hold out for long. Borneo had gone, and that alone assured Japan its oil. The iron mines in the Philippines had been taken. Rice was available from the French colony of Cochinchina. Everything that Japan needed to carry on the war she now had at hand.

On Feb. 19, 1941, the first Japanese attack on Australia came. Its air force raided Darwin on the north coast. This was in use by the Americans and British as a base for furthering operations in the Dutch Indies. Quite a number of ships were sunk and a lot of damage was caused. Other Japanese forces had previously seized Rabaul in British New Britain, which had been the American base for ships and planes en route to the Far East. It looked very much as if the Japanese might well attempt to seize Australia.

Taking no chances, and in fulfilment of its obligations as an Ally, America sent convoys across the Pacific to Australia. None was sent to the Philippines. With the temporary loss of the fleet at Pearl Harbor, it was impracticable to cope with the Japanese Navy at this time. Yet that Navy could not go beyond the limits of its steaming radius from its bases. American ships could go to New Zealand and Australia without coming within range of Japanese surface ships. They went in great numbers.

At first, the ships had carried supplies and serv-

ice troops. These troops constructed and operated air fields, depots and other military facilities, essential to efficiency in combat. The fighting men came later, but by March substantial numbers were en route. Air troops went first, and planes were available in Australia when March began.

By that time, Japan was making great headway in defeating the Allies in Java. Other Japanese forces were occupying the north coast of New Guinea. Considering that the Japanese planes were regularly raiding Darwin and another Allied base at Port Moresby, on the southeast coast of New Guinea, it seemed very probable that Australia would be attacked. On March 11, Premier Tojo of Japan said:

Australia must be aware that it is quite impossible for her to defend herself against our invincible forces, in view of her small population and the immensity of her territories, as well as her geographic position, so far from the United States and Great Britain.

This may have been psychological warfare. Whether Japan really intended to attack Australia is not yet known. It is possible that all she wanted was to frighten Australia into quitting. If that was the idea it did not succeed. But Australia was frightened. For Japan had crushed the Dutch in Java, just as Tojo had said, and Australia was next on his list. And Tojo went right on. On March 12, before his Parliament, he stated:

Australia and New Zealand are now directly confronted by the might of the Imperial forces. The Australians themselves must be fully aware . . . that it is utterly impracticable for Australia to defend herself against the might of our invincible forces. . . . If Australia does not rectify her present attitude, she will inevitably follow the footsteps of the Netherlands Indies.

Next day John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, made a radio appeal to the United States. Japan seemingly meant business; Australia felt threatened. She had lost some of her best troops at Singapore, and yet others were fighting in the Mediterranean area. Not enough soldiers remained to defend a country nearly as large as the United States.

I give you this warning. Australia is the last bastion between the west coast of America and the Japanese. If Australia goes, the Americas are wide open. It is said that the Japanese will by-pass Australia, and that they can be met and routed in India. I say to you that the saving of Australia is the saving of America's west coast. If you believe anything to the contrary you delude yourself.

He then promised that, if invasion came, Australia would fight to the last and would destroy cities and all in the enemy's path. He looked to America for counsel, advice and aid. He got it.

The United States transferred its leading general, Douglas MacArthur, from Corregidor to Australia. He arrived at Melbourne where, on

March 21, he announced that he had come not to defend Australia, but rather to organize an offensive against Japan. And that became his primary thought during the war.

On the 18th, the first large American convoy of troops and supplies arrived in Australia. A day earlier, Americans had landed at New Caledonia where, with the consent of the local French officials, a base was commenced. This was to protect the convoy route to Australia and to form a starting point for an American offensive northwards as soon as it could be prepared. This new base was under control of the Pacific Fleet, which consisted of ships that had survived Pearl Harbor, reinforced by others brought from the Atlantic. From this base came, in due time, the American advance through the Solomon Islands which commenced at Guadalcanal. From Australia also came General MacArthur's later advance through New Guinea.

By mid-April naval leaders were of the opinion that the Allies had sufficient men, planes and ships for an early counter-attack. They thought that the Japanese should not be allowed to make further gains.

An American naval force, under Rear Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, had left Pearl Harbor on April 16 for the southwest Pacific. When information arrived on May 1 of Japanese gatherings, it headed northwards, with a view to striking a blow. The Task Force included two aircraft carriers, some six cruisers and a number of destroyers.

On April 3, a Japanese force arrived off Guadalcanal in the Solomons; while another force appeared in the Louisiade Archipelago. Japanese air scouts failed to find the approaching American war ships, but an American naval plane discovered the Japanese ships on the north side of Guadalcanal. There were 15 of them, anchored at Tulagi. Admiral Fletcher decided to launch an air attack at dawn next day. He sailed at full steam all night and by daybreak was 100 miles south of Guadalcanal.

The two aircraft carriers—the *Lexington* and the *Yorktown*—launched their planes. They roared over the mountains of Guadalcanal and down on the other side, where the unsuspecting Japs were at anchor off Tulagi. The battle was a repetition of Pearl Harbor, but this time it was American planes attacking. They got in their first blows before any Japanese defensive fire broke out. Within 30 minutes, and with a loss of only 3 American planes, 14 out of the 15 enemy ships were reported hit.

After delivering this blow, the Task Force sailed westward. They did not know about the

other Japanese force in the Louisiade Archipelago. Neither did they know that a Japanese fleet followed them from the Solomons. The Task Force met its service ships at sea on the 5th. Without stopping, tankers came alongside the warships and pumped oil into them. Fueling ships at sea was a prime cause of American naval supremacy in the Pacific.

On the afternoon of the 6th the Task Force scouts discovered the enemy ships in the Louisiade Archipelago, north of Misima Island. The American ships, 250 miles away, at once turned north-eastwards towards this new hostile force. Japanese scouts also discovered the Americans.

On the morning of the 7th the American planes attacked the Jap ships off Misima. The Japs were not entirely surprised, but they were not quite ready. Only a few of their planes were in the air. These engaged the attacking Americans and accompanied them as they dived down against the Japanese ships in a confused and wild melée. The Jap ships were moving, and put up a hot defensive fire. Our claims are the sinking of one large aircraft carrier and one cruiser, out of 10 warships in all, for a loss of 3 American planes.

On the 8th, both fleets had planes out seeking the enemy. They were about 200 miles apart. Each discovered the other at about the same time. Both sides decided to attack with their planes. The two sets of planes crossed one another en route, without meeting.

The Americans found two Japanese aircraft carriers with numerous other ships southeast from Tagula sailing southwards. One of the two carriers was sunk by American bombs. Then there was an air fight. The Japanese found the two American carriers, sank the *Lexington*, and damaged the *Yorktown*. 40 out of 108 Jap planes which attacked were reported downed; and 25 American planes were lost in the air.

The naval engagements between May 3 and 8 have become known as the Battle of the Coral Sea. At the time both sides claimed a victory. After three years have passed, the Americans are seen as the real victors. It was their first victory in World War II. It coincided with their last defeat, which occurred at Corregidor on the 6th. It was the turning point in the war against Japan. Thereafter we never lost a campaign.

Yet the Battle of the Coral Sea was not a destruction of the enemy. After the battle the Americans withdrew, while the Japanese went ahead and occupied Guadalcanal and other neighboring islands. But that ended their advance.

If Japan really had any idea of invading Australia, that continent was saved by the demonstra-

tion of American naval might in the southwest Pacific. The Japanese High Command suspended their offensives towards the south. They made a complete shift of their naval and air forces. They planned to strike suddenly against Midway and the Aleutian Islands, before the American Navy could be brought back from around Australia. Never again was Australia in danger.

A DECADE OF HOMESTEADING

PATRICK T. QUINLAN

The people at the Granger Homesteads have shown the nation that it can be done. They have demonstrated that rural homesteading is truly a practical way of living. Just before Christmas in the year 1935—on the fifteenth of December to be exact—the first family of homesteaders took up residence; and this family was soon followed by forty-nine others. The idea of transferring fifty families from the squalor of a mining camp to a place of wholesome environment, of converting them from the condition of tenants to that of ownership, originated in the energetic mind of Monsignor Luigi G. Ligutti, and through his efforts the idea became a practical reality.

The initial step took place in the days of the great depression. The Government, it is true, made many attempts to relieve the miseries of the poor, but no investment in those days brought better or more tangible returns than the funds invested in 224 acres of Iowa's fertile prairie land. This acreage was divided into fifty-one tracts, each with an average of about four acres. Upon fifty of these plots homes were constructed with four, five or six rooms. A community building was located upon the remaining plot. A tract of land together with the home thereon was sold to each family at an approximate cost of \$1,925. (This does not represent the full cost of construction, but rather the basic cost.) No down-payment was demanded. Each homesteader, however, was expected to pay \$17.50 per month, and it was agreed that he would take title upon payment of ten per cent of the total. Each was given a period of forty years in which to pay the Government.

Seven years later, on September 1, 1942, the homesteaders formed a corporation known as the Granger Homestead Association. This Association took over all the obligations which were due to the Government. It functioned upon a non-profit basis and only homesteaders were admitted to membership. The Association gave the Govern-

ment a mortgage on the unpaid balance and received in return the deed to the homestead tract.

The contract entered into between the individual homesteader and the Association is of great interest. We do not care to enter into this in great detail, but at least some of its features might well be pointed out here. In Article Two it is agreed that should the homesteader decide to sell, the Association will have the first right and option to purchase the homestead upon payment of an appraised price decided upon by three persons, one selected by the homesteader, another selected by the Association and a third selected by both. According to Article Five, the homesteader agrees to use the property in person and for residential and agricultural purposes only. According to Article Seven, the homesteader agrees to use the pasture and the woodland to plant, cultivate and harvest crops and to conduct livestock, dairy and poultry enterprises on the property in accordance with approved farm organization and the management and practices of good husbandry. Article Twelve binds the homesteader to pay his just share toward the upkeep and the development of community building and property which serves the purposes of the group of homesteaders. Article Thirteen forbids the homesteader to mortgage the property, or to pledge it as security for any debt or loan without the written consent of the Board of Directors of the Association. It is plain that much thought was given to the composition of this contract. A note of added interest is the fact that the contract was drawn up after two years of democratic study concerning this subject on the part of the homesteaders themselves. (Should AMERICA readers be interested in receiving copies of the contract, they are available at the headquarters of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 3801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 12, Iowa.)

The fifty homesteaders had agreed to make full payment within a period of forty years. Only ten years have now passed, and twenty-nine members of the Association—well over half—have satisfied their obligations in full and have received title to the homes in which they dwell. Seven others expect to do so at an early date. It is to be remembered that these tracts were not gifts from a paternal Government to a group of needy families. These families were simply given an opportunity to change their status from that of tenants to that of owners. They have magnificently shown themselves to be capable of taking advantage of the opportunity when presented to them.

The homes in which these people live, although situated in the open country, have all of the comforts of modern urban dwellings. Each is equipped

with electricity, which provides not only lighting facilities but an individual electric force pump as well. Each home is constructed over a full and dry basement. Since taking over the deeds to their property, several families have added greatly to its value by the construction of additional buildings such as corn cribs, barns and brooder-houses. In spite of the fact that an early freeze destroyed many of the young fruit trees a few years ago, ownership has given incentive to the homesteaders to make replacements. An up-to-date survey has shown, moreover, that the fifty families have added to their wealth through the ownership of forty head of cattle, ninety-three pigs and 4,990 chickens. The value of the vegetables grown in the gardens within the past summer, to provide food for the table as well as for winter use, cannot be estimated; that it is considerable is certain.

The breadwinners of these families follow various occupations. In the beginning, forty-one of them were coal miners; at the present time twenty-two follow this occupation. Some of the mines in the vicinity have recently been closed. Many of the remaining workers commute to the city of Des Moines, some seventeen miles away. Others are employed in nearby towns.

Thirty-three of the original homesteaders still retain their homesteads. The remaining ones have, owing to various circumstances, departed. However, Father Gorman, the present pastor of Granger and the elected manager of the cooperative association, remarks that there is never a vacancy in a Granger homestead. Rather there is at all times a long waiting list of those who desire to occupy a home as soon as there is a vacancy.

Cooperation is taken for granted among these people. Not only are the tractor and other farm machines used cooperatively throughout the planting and harvesting seasons, but credit-union facilities are utilized in the purchase of live stock and for other productive purposes.

Best of all, a true family spirit exists around the Granger Homesteads. Two hundred children are to be found in the families which dwell upon these acres. One hundred and thirty-one of these reside upon the tracts. Thirty-nine boys and girls have faithfully served their country during the recent war. Five instances are known in which sons and daughters have replaced their deceased parents on the homesteads, or have purchased when others have departed. At a time when the leaders of the nation are in turmoil and seeking a solution for the problem of juvenile delinquency, such problems do not present themselves for solution among the owners of Granger homes. This investment has paid dividends a thousand-fold.

General MacArthur's directives to the Japanese Government on land tenure and agricultural policy are particularly thorough and worthy of careful study. A major objective is, of course, the permanent elimination of feudalism and correction of the discriminatory tax system whereby the agricultural population bore much of the burden of industrial and military expansion. The government—whose proposed program of land distribution and reclamation was rejected as inadequate—is given until March 15, 1946, to produce a rural-reform program covering the following points: 1) replacement of absentee ownership by operator ownership; 2) control of purchase prices from non-operating land owners; 3) long-term purchase provisions commensurate with income; 4) reasonable protection of former tenants against reversion to tenancy status.

Farm tenancy and absentee ownership have slowly but steadily increased in Japan since the reform of 1868, when feudalism was theoretically abolished. In 1929 some 46 per cent of the farms were cultivated under lease, and 58 per cent of the farm population had to rent additional land to supplement their own meager holdings. Previous attempts at reform have not proved very successful. Japanese history, like that of many another country, bears witness to the need for continued protection, assistance and education of small landholders if the reappportionment of land and the legal abolition of the *latifundia* system is to be more than temporary.

Earlier land reforms failed of their full objective because the rehabilitation of the tenants was incomplete. The present directives recognize this danger and call for additional measures safeguarding the little farmers against encroachment by large landholders and commercial interests. Legislation is therefore demanded which will provide long- and short-term credit at reasonable rates; protect the growers against exploitation by processors and distributors; control and stabilize prices; educate the agrarian population and, finally, encourage a free agricultural cooperative movement.

Needless to say, cooperative organizations everywhere will welcome the revival of the cooperative movement in Japan. They regard its liberation from governmental domination and oppression, which rendered it inactive during the military ascendancy, as the beginning of new initiative and mutual assistance among small landholders.

All the measures indicated by General Mac-

Arthur are radical in the sense that they strike at the roots of basic abuses in land tenure and farm life. They take into consideration the fact that the farm family, located on a productive piece of land of its own, is a definite safeguard of personal dignity, family life and democratic participation in government to a degree rarely equaled by a non-owning, wage-earning class, either urban or rural.

The Japanese agricultural reforms are a heartening sign that the common people will in the future have a greater voice in shaping policies and building a new national life. The irony of it is that some Christian nations of the West might profit by the MacArthur directives. Even the United States should give them serious thought.

BEHIND THE GM STRIKE

Every human person is doubly sacred. He is sacred by reason of his origin from God; he is sacred by reason of his redemption by Christ.

It is not the least of Christianity's contributions to civilization that it has striven constantly to force this double truth on the attention of men. Without the recognition of the innate dignity and sanctity of the individual, there can be great material progress, but no civilization worthy of the name.

That laissez-faire capitalism, which dehumanized the working masses, arose after the middle of the eighteenth century and flourished through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries was no accident. By that time the religion of Christ had ceased to have much influence on the civilization of the West. A new age was emerging, an age of secularism, in which the arts and sciences, politics and economics were to declare their independence of religion and go their proud, autonomous ways.

Thus it happened that human beings became subject to the impersonal forces of the marketplace. Having been freed gradually from the slavery of the ancient, pagan world, workers were handed over to a new kind of bondage, which was called euphemistically "the law of supply and demand." Of all the crimes of laissez-faire capitalism, this was the worst. It provoked, by way of reaction, the rise of Marxian Socialism; it shocked the conscience of Rome and inspired Leo's *Rerum Novarum*; it started a workers' crusade, called trade-unionism, devoted to the reestablishment of human dignity in the marketplace.

It may seem at first sight a long cry from these moral and historical observations to the bitter realities of strife-torn Detroit. It is not so. For beneath the surface the fundamental issue in the struggle between General Motors and the United Automobile Workers is the refusal of the workers to be any longer the voiceless victims of impersonal economic forces. They have learned from experience that collective bargaining over wages, hours and working conditions, while productive of much good, can never give them that material well being which notably assists men to develop their personalities. Of what avail are fair hourly wage rates, a forty-hour week and decent working conditions if the workers are unable to find jobs? Of what use is collective bargaining in the depths of a national depression?

These questions have been forced on unions by the boom-bust cycle of our capitalistic economy, and they are seeking the answers in a perfectly understandable way. They are striving to widen the field of collective bargaining with a view to forcing industrial leaders to adopt wage, price and profit policies designed to level off the ups and downs of business activity.

That General Motors understands what the real issue is has been clear all along, although many people—and most newspapers—seem to have missed the point. After the publication of the Corporation's counter-proposals on December 17, there is no longer any excuse for misunderstanding. "Wages, hours of employment and other conditions of employment are the only matters which are subject to collective bargaining" stated GM, and it went on to say that all other matters "are the sole responsibility of the corporation."

Whether the UAW will accept this limitation on collective bargaining is very doubtful, since it is difficult to see how trade unions, dealing with corporate giants in a mass-production economy, can fulfil their historic function within such bounds. If the rights of the human person are to prevail over the blind forces of the marketplace and the boundless thirst for profits—and it is the purpose of trade unions to see that they do—management must, sooner or later, acknowledge its duty to adopt wage, price and profit policies calculated to stop the boom-bust cycle. Its unwillingness to do so, and to recognize labor's interest in the question, is primarily responsible for the strike at General Motors. This will become still clearer as the hearings before a Presidential fact-finding board proceed in Washington.

In January, 1945, the Allied armies in Europe were desperately biting at the Ardennes salient, grimly crawling up the Italian peninsula. The Russians were besieging Budapest. And MacArthur was poised for the invasion of Luzon.

The whole nation sensed the military crisis, and every loyal citizen rose to his responsibilities. Our purpose was settled, very clear before us—to win the war. In January, 1945, the United States had many anxieties, but few doubts, and hardly any profound interior self-questionings. We had confidence in ourselves, and others had confidence in us.

Change the scene now to January, 1946, and mark the changes wrought by the year's crowded, cataclysmic events. The whole face of Europe has been changed; so has the face of Asia. But perhaps the subtlest and most disturbing change has been wrought in the spiritual countenance, so to speak, of the United States.

Lines of determination have weakened into an expression of hesitancy, bewilderment, doubt. The gaze fixed upon world-wide responsibilities has wavered, and more than a gleam of cynicism has crept into eyes once bright with the vision of ideals. The face reflects an inward uncertainty so great as to breed a willingness to listen to the insidious suggestion that the Japanese war was started in Washington, not in Tokyo, and that, even if Hitler did start the European war, well, the war is over now, and the thing to do is to get out of Europe as soon as possible; even if we knew what we wanted to do there, we would be helpless to do it, because Russia is irresistible.

Where is the serious, efficient, confident giant of January, 1945? And how is he changed into the tentative creature of January, 1946, whose awkward and timid gestures betray the unsureness of his purposes and the unsoundness of the counsels which guide him?

In seeking an answer to that question, one might stumble upon the profoundest spiritual significance of the year 1945. Perhaps (who but the angels would know with certainty?) 1945 has revealed us to ourselves, as a people able to grasp proximate issues, not ultimate ones—a people competent in all the techniques whereby physical force is mustered and deployed victoriously, but unskilled in the moral and juridical process which is peace.

How to split the atom—that is the sort of problem we understand. How to unite mankind—that is a different sort of problem. Have we the "know how" to solve it? That is 1946's question.

AMG AND THE CHURCH

A series of acts are reported on the part of our military government which appear to indicate a desire to suppress the normal activities of the Catholic Church in the American and British occupation zones of Germany. If these reports are even in part true, there seem to be only two possible explanations. It may be that these things are done through sheer ignorance—the witless blundering of irresponsible subordinates. In that case, it is time the proper liaison or advisory agency should be at work to do for the Catholics what is being accomplished by other agencies for persons of other denominations. Or it may be that these actions are carefully planned, and are to be ascribed to anti-Catholic or anti-religious bias. In this latter alternative, the sooner the facts are widely brought to the attention of English-speaking people the better.

Stars and Stripes, U. S. Army publication, carried the following AP dispatch, from Munich, under date of November 12:

Release of a pastoral letter, already published in other parts of Germany and England, is being held up by American Military Government officials here in a dispute with Michael Cardinal Faulhaber over certain passages, it was disclosed today.

As a result of the deadlock, Catholic Bishops and the rank and file of Catholic clergy in upper Bavaria still have no official knowledge of the contents of the letter which emanated from their annual Fulda conference many weeks ago.

The AMG's district information-control council has demanded that the Cardinal eliminate the disputed passages before the letter is published in the diocesan organ, or is reprinted separately for the guidance of his clergy or for the customary reading from the pulpits.

One disputed sentence reads: "You were ready to die for your country, be ye now ready to live for it." The council insists that nobody died for the country, but only for Hitler.

Another sentence endorses Catholic parochial schools in preference to, or alongside, public schools. The elimination of the sentence was demanded, apparently on the ground that parochial schools would bring discord.

In its issue of Nov. 4, 1945, *St. Joseph's Blatt*, American German-language publication, points out that a flagrant violation of the 1933 Concordat between the Reich and the Holy See, contrary to diplomatic assurances given to the latter, is committed by the British military government's policy. The British are reported to permit the continuation in Germany of the National Socialist *Gemeinschaft*, which forbade any teaching of religion, to the exclusion of Germany's traditional "confessional school," where children received instruction according to their respective beliefs. Yet, as the same periodical points out, the population of the British-occupied region is 47 per cent Catholic. In many places polls were made by both

Protestant and Catholic clergy to ascertain the parents' wishes. In one place, 1,625 parents out of 1,751 voted for the restoration of the confessional schools; in another section the vote was 160 out of 202.

Immediately after the liberation of his diocese, Count Clemens von Galen, Bishop of Münster, applied to the British authorities for permission to start a Catholic church paper. To date, it is reported, his request has remained unanswered. Yet the strongest and most persistent voice ever lifted in Germany against the Nazis and all their fiendish works was that of Bishop von Galen, again and again, at the risk of suffering exile, death or torture.

Father Zeiger, S.J., Rector of the German-Hungarian College in Rome, commissioned by the Holy Father to interview Bishop von Galen and Archbishop Jäger of Paderborn, is said to have been refused access to either of them by the British authorities. In the occupied regions—save in the French—it is stated that neither Papal encyclicals nor Bishops' pastorals may be published.

Even the Nazis did not go so far as did recently our own authorities in Regensburg when they insisted upon removal of crucifixes and religious art from the walls of a hospital we have taken over for occupation use. "The odd situation," writes an eye-witness of this event, "is that although we are using the hospitals, the Brothers of Mercy who operated one of the hospitals, and the Sisters of Charity who operated the other one, are still living in the buildings"—doing practically menial work. While the commanding officer technically followed Army policy, his conduct was at least unfortunate.

Space forbids the multiplication of other incidents, the gravest of which concern the suppression of Christian education and interference with the Church's liberty of expression. The very unpleasant question obtrudes itself: is our Government determined to prevent religion—Catholic or Protestant—from acting as a constructive force in the rehabilitation of Germany? If so, it is committing a mistake as insane as the loosing of an atom bomb. Let us hope these errors may be rectified before a permanent record be written of intolerance and shame.

A more hopeful sign, which has been reported by *Religious News Service*, is that the *Petrusblatt*, Catholic church paper, has resumed publication in Berlin for the first time in seven years, after a six-months negotiation between AMG and Church authorities. The *Petrusblatt* had a record of denunciation of the Nazis from the very beginning of Nazism.

LITERATURE AND ART

MARKS OF CATHOLIC ART

THOMAS L. O'BRIEN

IT IS TIME WE TRY to find out what "Catholic art" is. Time to establish, if possible, a clear criterion which will help the critic decide when a work is *both* Catholic and art.

This article is an attempt to do just that. It claims that the four marks which distinguish the Catholic Church, namely, *unity, sanctity, universality and apostolicity*, should likewise distinguish Catholic art.

And this is no mere pious fancy. For what does the term "Catholic Church" actually mean? A building? An organization? A set liturgy? No—more than all these. "Catholic Church" means a body of people organized under one head, believing the same truths, and living the same Divine life through Sanctifying Grace. It is the "Whole Christ," the Mystical Body whose Head is Christ. It is made up essentially of people; and the thought processes of those people are different from others because of what they believe; their emotional life is tempered because of the liturgy and moral demands of their religion; their very being is different because of the life they now share.

Now, that which most intimately flows into the operation called "art" is precisely those elements in man which are affected most by his Catholic religion, namely his thought processes, his emotional life, his being itself. Hence the intimate union between the art of the Catholic and the Church which makes him "Catholic."

There is an objection, however. The marks of unity, sanctity, universality, apostolicity are applied to the whole Church, not to any one individual member. But art is generally a highly individualized work, resulting in a highly individualized artistic product of one man. And certainly it is not legitimate to qualify any part of a whole by those qualities which belong properly to the whole itself; it is not legitimate, for example, to say that the gear-shift in an automobile "rides easy."

However, the objection is not valid, because one is a member of the Catholic Church precisely because he shares wholly in all that makes up the essence of Catholicism—"the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The whole Church is summed up in each member in a real, albeit mystical way, in virtue of the union which joins the member and the Church, the member and the Body. If I lose the State of Grace, the whole Church is less holy. If I praise God, the whole Church through participation is praising God. Within the Catholic Church there is no such thing, strictly speaking, as a separated "individual."

Hence, the valid foundation for this reasoning. Catholic art is the product of the Catholic Church, alive in her members. It therefore should enjoy the same qualities as does the Church itself.

Unity: The first, and most obvious, meaning of the term "unity in art" is so commonly known that there is no reason for spending time on it here. It is the second idea which is more important: *the unity of order existing in all things*. Does the work of art reveal the truth that *the individual subject of this work of art is in reality taken up and completed in a larger unity which embraces all things*? If it doesn't, then it may be art, but it is not Catholic art.

The test of this larger unity must be demanded of the art of a Catholic because of what he is, and what he knows. He knows, for instance, that all things have a common origin, God. He knows that all things come from God's hand, and share in at least one function, that of externalizing God's several perfections. The artist knows that all things have a common end—God. He knows that the law of finality impressed on the deepest being of every existing thing leads that thing inevitably back to Him for Whom it was created. Even man, whether he wills or no, serves in some mysterious way the end of his creation—God's glory.

The artist knows likewise that all things play their part in fulfilling the plan of God's Providence. And with the growth of his Catholic insight, he can see the excellence and beauty which that plan sheds on everything within it. One wire may be of little value in itself. But if it happens to be a control-wire of a whistling P-38, it takes on a new value from its surroundings. In like manner, the value of any individual being is enhanced by its participation in the Divine operation.

The artist is led to know, too, that all things are unified even spatially. For instance, while I write this, I am in immediate spatial contact with the floor which supports me. That floor in turn is in spatial contact with the walls, which reach the ground. That ground is in either immediate or mediate contact with every other spatial being which exists on it, above it, or beneath it.

But most of all, the Catholic artist knows that, because Christ redeemed man, all the redeemed are united in the flow of Divine life into which they are adopted. And he knows further that through this new and amazing unity among men all the rest of the universe is brought together in a new and equally amazing bond.

Thus, a Catholic artist, by virtue of his Catholicism, cannot concentrate on any one subject of his artistic vision as an isolated reality. Into his vision must come the overtones, the suggestions of this larger unity, the totality of things as they exist, now and in history.

It would be shockingly obvious to say that this quality of larger unity is elusive in art. But because it is elusive does not mean that it defies detection. It is quite plain in the later plays of Shakespeare, particularly the *Tempest*. It is quite painfully absent in most modern literature, however pleasant it might be.

Universality: Universality follows immediately as the day the night. For if the artist has within his work that suggestion of the larger unity described above, his work is by that very fact rendered universal, and he fulfils Aristotle's demand that "poetry be more philosophical and more serious than history." For in his work he has embodied that same quality which makes the Catholic Church inherently acceptable to all men of all times and of all places. The barrier of language or custom, which the Church transcends, qualifies this universality in art, but only accidentally. It can be overcome.

Sanctity: By sanctity, I do *not* mean that the subject of Catholic art must be something pious. It may be; but if it is, the artist's strength of soul must be great enough to keep his work free from the blight of sentimentality and bad taste. The "holy" pictures and the "holy" verses which have flooded the Catholic markets during the past several

decades are certainly not art, and in many cases are barely Catholic. What I do mean is this: in virtue of his conscious position as a member of Christ's Mystical Body, the Catholic artist must bring to his work two fountainheads of holiness: first, a realization of his own dignity as a son of God through Christ; and second, a penetrating insight which reveals the sanctity of God's fingerprints on the world He made.

First, the subjective holiness, that from the artist. Philosophers have a saying which goes something like this; any act arises from the total nature of the one acting. When Saint Thomas thought, it was not his intellect alone that placed that act; it was he, his whole personality. When Menuhin plays, it is not merely his arms and fingers that play, it is the whole man.

It follows, then, that if you change the nature of the one acting, you change thereby the act itself. If Saint Thomas had been a monk in the desert, he certainly would have thought, but not in precisely the same way in which he actually did. Had Menuhin a different background, he probably would still have played, but certainly he would not have played in precisely the same fashion as he does play today.

Now if this is true on the natural level, it is equally true on the supernatural. Once the nature in man is "changed" by elevation through Divine grace to a state above its due level, then the acts flowing from that nature take on the quality of that "change." Theologians say that such acts are now "meritorious."

However, half-blind human vision can detect no trace of this supernatural holiness in neutral acts. But in the realm of art, acts are closely wedded to the soul of the artist. If the work of art is perfect, it perfectly reveals the idea that gave it birth. And if that idea is the product of a personality sanctified by Grace, it must contain that sanctity somehow. Hence the work of art, in revealing the idea, must likewise reveal the personality-holiness which is its real source. The work thus shares, by participation, in the conscious holiness of the principle, that is to say, of the artist.

Thus, for example, the truly Catholic artist could never embody in a work of art an idea which is exclusively that of frustration, of futility, of sneering at things. Not that he could not portray situations which are frustrated, which are futile, at which he sneers. But his portrayal must be of such a nature that it carries within itself the full redolence of his own holy *completion*. In other words, because a Catholic artist is what he is and knows what he knows, his work must contain the impression of *reverence* in face of the total beauty of God's universe.

In brief, a Catholic artist who is consciously living a Divine life through Grace must approach his work with a mind reverent enough to pierce to the deepest reality of his subject, where reverence alone is allowed.

So much for the artist himself. Now for the holiness which comes from the world outside the artist, which he seeks to portray.

The Catholic artist is preeminently conscious of God's creative act, by which he drew out of nothing everything that exists. He must likewise be conscious that God must, by the very nature of things, actively uphold all that He has created as long as He wills them to exist. Hence the Catholic artist is constantly aware of the Divine fingerprints on the total reality of the world which surrounds him.

But, beyond that, the Catholic artist is conscious that Christ, the God-Man, in coming into contact with the

material world around Him during his earthly life, sanctified that material. In like manner a very holy man in some way sanctifies the room in which he lived. The life of Our Divine Lord is full of accounts of His using the material world around Him for His divine purposes. Hence, through contact with Holiness Incarnate, the material universe itself takes on a certain holiness, which may be called analogous.

This extrinsic holiness is furthered by another contact with Christ. The bread and wine of the Eucharist are products of all of nature, for the land, the sea, the air have all collaborated by giving of themselves that the bread and wine be formed. So when Christ, through the words of His consecrating priest, changes the substance of bread and wine into His own Body and Blood, He is accepting as good that nature which is summarized in the bread and wine.

Besides all this, human nature has received new dignity in Christ. All art has human nature for the object of its direct or indirect imitation. If the object of the work is "man in action," then human nature is imitated directly. And certainly artistic truth demands that the new dignity enter into the sum of reality which the artist attempts to portray.

If the artist chooses as his object a thing which is not human, he is forced to give that thing a significance beyond that which it enjoys as it actually exists. Otherwise art would be mere reproduction. This new significance comes from the artist himself; and thus the artist himself becomes, in a way, the object of his own imitation.

And if he be a Catholic artist, the added aura of significance which he gives extramental reality reveals the dignity of an adopted son of God.

Thus the sources or reasons for holiness in Catholic art are two, one from the artist himself, the other from the object of his imitative action. One is the consciousness of his own dignity as a son of God by adoption; the other is the dignity and reverence that are demanded by all that is God-sprung in the thing he is imitating.

Apostolicity: Just as universality flows necessarily from the note of unity, so does apostolicity flow from the note of sanctity.

Here we take the meaning of the word "apostolic" from its true meaning when applied to the Catholic Church. In saying the Church is "apostolic," we are actually saying that her present doctrine is the doctrine which Christ taught, because it has come down in a direct and unbroken line from Christ's Apostles. And, furthermore, we say that it is *true* because it is the God-Man's doctrine. Hence the real point of apostolicity is *truth*. And, moreover, we learn from Our Lord Himself that it is the *beauty* of His truth, revealed, not argued about, which constitutes the heart of the apostolic endeavor.

Right here is the essence of artistic "apostolicity"—a work of art shares this mark if its artistic truth is so clear, so deeply drawn, so comprehensively compelling, that the very beauty of that truth makes it something that imperiously demands satisfying contemplation of its own excellence.

Thus the four marks of Catholic art are the four marks of the Catholic Church: unity, universality, sanctity and apostolicity. It is easy to see what terrifying demands those qualities make on the Catholic artist. It is easy to see how great Catholic art depends so intimately on the great, soul-expanding truths of Catholic dogma, not on the shriveling moralism to which the "glad tidings of great joy" have been sometimes reduced.

BOOKS

THE APPEAL OF RELIGION

CHRISTINE ROUX. By *Thames Williamson*. Current Books. \$2.50

IT IS PERHAPS an unconscious tribute to the all-pervading interest that religion exercises on the human heart that it impels so many authors, qualified or not, to launch out on a treatment of it. Moreover, once they have embarked on it, they often seem drawn irresistibly to scale the higher ranges of religion—to treat its intensely spiritual sectors. We get, as a result, novels on the life of Christ, stories about the cloister and the Religious life. But such sincere interest, while natural and almost inevitable, does not always guarantee competence.

Mr. Williamson's book is a good case in point. It deals with a young French girl expelled by the anti-clerical laws of the turn of the century from the Dominican convent where she is a novice. She goes to Paris, seeking admission to another convent that has thus far escaped closure. It, too, is boarded up shortly after her arrival. She takes work, meets two men, one a cultured lecher, the other a rough, honest peasant. Both fall in love with her, the peasant honorably, the gentleman with the intent to seduce. She keeps her dream of re-entering the convent, but at last, when she applies to her priest-advisor to join some nuns who will be allowed to go on the missions, he counsels her that she has no vocation, that she had better marry. The book ends with Christine resuming friendship with the peasant.

I am of one mind regarding the book's literary value, of two minds regarding its moral implications. Its literary value is slight, mainly because of an atmosphere of unreality that befalls it. Mr. Williamson, intrigued as he may be about conventual and spiritual life, has no real grasp of it. The convent, to him, is a dreamy lotus-isle. The celestial peace with which he surrounds it is baby-blue and saccharine; even when Christine is living in Paris, it is the most casual thing in the world for her to spend several hours on her knees in prayer. Now, prayer is undoubtedly worth that much; there are people who love to pray, but for Christine it is as easy to pray as it is to change one's coat. The author gives no indication (probably because he does not realize) that the ability to pray is a hard-won thing, that the spiritual life is not a matter of drifting along according to moods, but a campaign, a discipline that summons the best energies of the soul.

The moral implications are puzzling. The story is for the most part concerned with the subtle build-up the profligate gives to his strategy toward seduction. He poses as the protector of Christine's innocence; it might all be called a sort of spiritual seduction. His remarks to her, with one or two exceptions, are all quite guiltless; but his lecherous intention is quite early manifest. Christine emerges from the slimy situation unscathed, but the very cast of the story throws around the whole book an atmosphere that is uneasy.

One final disclaimer. When the old priest gives Christine his concluding advice, though he has some good things to say about the soundness and sanctity of sex, he wobbles far afield when he says that the Church wants those to become nuns who are not fit, physically or temperamentally, to become mothers. The religious vocation is not a refuge for misfits. The author's implication that it is shows quite clinchingly that, whatever be the charm the Religious life exercises over him, the theme was too profoundly Catholic for his competent management. HAROLD C. GARDINER

INTERRACIAL BOOKSHELF

SINCE LADIES' HATS are a puzzlement to this reviewer, he is unable to evoke a clear image of just what was worn by Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*. But if it struck any feminine eye, we can inform you, Madame, that it was created by Mildred Blount, of the John-Fredericks Company in New York. Mildred, you will also be interested to know, surprised the head of that millinery firm when she appeared at his office. He had never before employed a Negro girl and none had ever applied. But Mildred was quite certain that she could do the job and, in giving him that assurance, she departed from a venerated pattern which bids vocational-guidance experts to counsel colored youth never to prepare for a career unless "Negroes are already employed in it." As Mildred shaped her own pattern, so have a steadily increasing number of Negro young men and women who are enlarging the scope of Negro achievement.

Struggle—against ill health, against poverty, against harsh racial barriers—gave Miss Blount the "assurance" that got her over the employment hump. In *We Have Tomorrow*, by Arna Bontemps (Houghton Mifflin. \$2), her story is briefly but vividly told, along with that of eleven other young Negroes (still young), who have made their way in business, professions and other careers against tremendous odds: Dean Dixon, the orchestra conductor; A. P. Henry, director of the Coast Guards Radio and Maritime Trade Center; Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., West Point graduate and Distinguished Flying Cross wearer; C. V. Watts, of Chicago's Wilcox and Follett Educational Publications, etc.

Far back of Negro youth's achievement of the present day lies a two-hundred-year record of the Negro's struggle for freedom in this country. Herbert Aptheker's *Essays in the History of the American Negro* (International Publishers. \$2) recounts the "struggles of the Negro people for emancipation during the main epochs of their country's history." Four periods are covered: Negro Slave Revolts in the United States, 1526-1860; The Negro in the American Revolution; The Negro in the Abolition Movement; The Negro in the Civil War. The author, in militant style, assails the notion that slavery and its social concomitants were always patiently accepted by the Negroes. On the contrary, there is a long record of recurrent resistance, of agitation, sabotage and rebellion.

I frequently took occasion, in earlier years, to put some questions to some of the old survivors of the slave days with whom I came in contact in my missionary work in Southern Maryland. Slave conditions in that part of the country are generally thought—and I believe correctly—to have been notably better than elsewhere, save perhaps in Catholic Louisiana. Yet these old people—such as "Aunt Pidgeon" (Mrs. Mary) Jones, Mrs. Charity Lee (still surviving), Columbus Smith and others—invariably referred to the slave days as the "bad times." Though some of them had pleasant or inspiring recollections of good people—priests or devout Catholic laity who in their own way did what they could to make things tolerable—none spoke of the "times" without great bitterness. They also had a store of unpleasant, often hateful, remembrance, which they reluctantly revived.

"Does I 'member much 'bout slavery times? Well, there is no way for me to disremember unless I die," said an ex-slave to the present president of the American Folklore Society, E. A. Botkin, when he and his fellow workers interviewed some hundred of these survivors in connection with the

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pronouncement will be found
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Federal Writers' Project. A rich selection from their findings—rich in anecdotes, in local and human color, in light and shade, pride and humility and shrewd narrative and earthy wisdom—is contained in his collection, *Lay My Burden Down* (University of Chicago Press. \$3.50). Not the least in the delectable and original features of this real folk anthology are the photographs of some former slaves themselves. Mostly "Old Master" appears in a pretty grim light, but Ellen Betts, of Louisiana, Saint Landry Parish, has a more jocund tale of how she quieted Marse's babies by "out-screeching" them when they bawled. When she "talked sassy," "Marse just shake he finger at me 'cause he knowed I'se a good one and don't let no little mite starve." There are stories and anecdotes innumerable, not the least of which is the tale of the kindly Ku-Klux doctor, whom the slaves helped to hide in a grave when the Federals were after him. But as old Henry Banner, of Little Rock, Ark., aged 89, remarked: "Freedom is better than slavery, though I done see both sides."

Talking of Negro anthologies, there are a couple more. *Primer for White Folks* (Doubleday. \$3.50) is edited by Bucklin Moon, author of the novel, *The Darker Brother*. The title hints at the contents, which are writings by and about Negroes from slavery days to today's struggle for a share in American democracy. The early history of the Negro in the United States, relations between blacks and whites, are discussed in this lively collection. The papers are chosen for their literary values as much as for their information. They will afford the average person, white or otherwise, a pretty fair idea of the lay of the interracial land. One of the most satisfactory in the series is by Sterling Brown, *Count Us In*. W. W. Alexander, himself a Southern white sociologist, bluntly declares that segregation "not only separates the races but symbolizes the idea of the inevitable inferiority of Negroes." In the words of Lillian Smith, Negroes have been "let in" on the meaning of democracy. It is no longer possible now to let them out.

With a wider scope than just white and black, is another anthology, *This Way to Unity*, edited by Arnold Herrick and Herbert Askwith (Oxford Book Company, New York). This consists of a collection of papers, documents and literary numbers dealing with various means of promoting better relations between racial, national and religious groups. Aimed particularly at use in the field of intercultural education, and provided with an extensive study outline and reading lists, it is a useful handbook for reference and expressive quotations.

Published for the Phelps-Stokes Fund, the H. W. Wilson Company in New York City have issued a preparatory volume to the long-planned four-volume *Encyclopedia of the Negro*. This preparatory volume, by Dr. W. E. B. DuBois and Guy B. Johnson, contains reference lists and reports, an alphabetical list of major subjects, library resources for Negro studies in the United States and abroad, etc. The work is a *must* for all libraries.

Least in size, but by no means least in interest and importance, is the carefully edited, attractive volume entitled *Negro Catholic Writers, 1900-1943*, by Sister Mary Anthony Scally, R.S.M., librarian at Mount Saint Agnes College, Baltimore. Her chosen scope is restricted: writers, only Negro and Catholic (hence not Negroes who may write about Catholics); only those whose writings appeared in the United States since 1900. Nevertheless she has seventy persons listed in her "bio-bibliography." Many of these are already familiar to readers of *AMERICA*, many of them have been developed by the *Interracial Review* and other publications which have encouraged Negro Catholics in this coun-

try to self-expression. In view of the inclusive and painstaking indexing work of the Reverend Arnold Garvy, S.J., of Chicago, over the many years, it is gratifying to see a generous tribute paid by the author to this veteran bibliographer. The concluding words of her preface deserve careful consideration:

Though the difficulties in the way of Catholic Negro authorship are tremendous, they are being overcome by the valiant efforts of progressive men and women in all parts of the country, who, undaunted by failure and discouragement, press on in spite of obstacles, confident that, by the laws of God and this country, the Negro must eventually attain his rightful heritage of justice. More books should be written by Catholic Negroes. A vast field is open to them. The future may produce a Catholic Paul Laurence Dunbar or James Weldon Johnson. Had Maurice Fields lived, he might have attained a reputation as great as either of these. It is to be hoped that the eyes of our Catholic educators will be opened to the far-reaching possibilities for achievement among our colored Catholics, that a helping hand will be extended to them, and words of encouragement and recognition bestowed upon those who deserve them.

American Negro Catholics are a small minority within two large minorities, one racial, the other religious. But relatively few as they are, they are closely bound by their Faith and all its glorious traditions and opportunities with every race and nation, as well as with the largest of all Negro Christian groupings—some 20,000,000 Catholics, wholly or partially of Negro race, throughout the world. JOHN LAFARGE

THE PROBLEM OF THE MIGRANTS

SEASONAL FARM LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES. By Harry Schwartz. Columbia University Press. \$2.25
RAISING AND PROCESSING the agricultural products whereby men are fed and clothed has ever been the time-absorbing occupation of approximately two-thirds of the human race. While it is true that in industrialized countries, like our own, agriculture tends to engage a smaller percentage of time and the available labor force, the day will never come when farming in its various phases can be reduced to a state of insignificance in human affairs. If anything, the postwar era will witness a new interest in agriculture. Already the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization has insisted on the need for increased production to raise the nutrition and living standards of a badly underfed and poorly clothed world. In achieving this objective it is only to be expected that more attention will be paid to the living and working conditions of those who produce food and fiber for their fellow men.

Seasonal Farm Labor in the United States directs attention to our farm-labor force. Eleventh of the Columbia University Studies in the History of American Agriculture, it restricts itself to a consideration of the socio-economic conditions of seasonal or casual workers. These provide the mass manpower needed at certain times of the year, particularly in planting and harvesting months. Mechanical developments have only partially replaced their hand labor. It is, moreover, very doubtful whether certain types of fruits, vegetables and berries can ever be cared for and harvested without the assistance of large numbers of additional workers at the peak seasons. It is precisely the sharply fluctuating demand for their services which makes the lot of the seasonal agricultural workers so insecure.

Seasonal workers, together with sharecroppers, belong to the most depressed class of American labor. In certain areas, of course, the seasonal farm-labor force is composed of housewives, school children and temporarily unemployed

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The Index to AMERICA for Volume 73 (from April 7, 1945, to September 29, 1945) is now ready for distribution. It will be mailed to subscribers who have already requested it or to other subscribers sending a request. Address America Press, 70 East 45th St., New York 17, N. Y.

who go out from the cities for a day at a time, or for somewhat longer periods, to help harvest the crops on nearby farms. The manpower shortage of war years resulted in considerable recruitment from this source. But seasonal workers generally do not belong in this category. They constitute a class by themselves, widely popularized during the 'thirties when industrial unemployment increased their numbers. They are essentially "migrants" who follow the crops from one farm or region to another and whose living and working conditions more or less approach those portrayed in the *Grapes of Wrath*. Gradually improving conditions still leave much to be desired. Many growers fear the increased costs which higher wage-rates would bring. Moreover, the very instability of employment makes it difficult to supervise housing, health, education and medical care. With few exceptions, agricultural workers are excluded from social-security and compensation benefits. Race and class discrimination aggravates the situation.

The number of seasonal workers at the harvest peak is practically three million. In slack seasons only about a million find employment in agriculture. This fluctuation of supply and demand is characteristic and distinguishes the casual worker—contracted for by the day, the week, or the piece—from the "hired hands" who enjoy a certain amount of stability in their work. The hired hands number approximately 700,000 and constitute a permanent portion of the farm-labor force. Hired by the month, or for longer periods, they have all-year-round employment, caring for dairy farms and orchards, and doing odd jobs on general- and truck-farms. In peak seasons they are outnumbered by migrant and seasonal workers more than three to one.

Mr. Schwartz has given special notice to casual labor in the fruit, vegetable and sugar-beet industries. A thorough examination was made into migration tendencies, working conditions, wage rates and general status of the workers. Treatment is scholarly, and the arguments are strengthened by reference to sources and the inclusion of statistical data. *Seasonal Farm Labor* is interestingly written, and wise selection of material has made possible a comprehensive picture of the situation within the compass of 160 pages.

It is a book of particular interest at this time when exclusion of farm workers from social-security benefits and wages-and-hours provisions is attracting considerable attention. Students, social workers and religious leaders can find here the answers to many—though not all—of the questions they have about seasonal workers. Heretofore little definite information was available. The general reader interested in social conditions will also appreciate the book.

WILLIAM J. GIBBONS

INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS, 1944. Edited by Arthur P. Whitaker. Columbia University Press. \$3.25.

IN OUR CURRENT ANXIETIES over the settlement of the war and the coming of a lasting peace, it is of highest interest to know how we in American lands stand to remain united in defense of American ideals. We hold it as a maxim that our own foreign policy must have the firm backing of our own citizens. It is equally imperative that protection of hemispheric rights rest upon an understanding of hemispheric movements, thoughts and common action. Hence the value of this annual survey of Inter-American Affairs.

Three former volumes constitute today a first-rate history of the war years and the progress or decline of Pan-American success. They furnish the background of this fourth number in the series.

In the present overview of the past twelve months, dominant issues concern the one disturbing factor of Argentina and the triple troubles of Communism-Protestantism-His-

panidad. They are handled with clarity and penetration, mirroring the action of our Department of State. Yet they by no means exhaust the contribution of this book. Back of such matters is the internal economy, social and cultural activity, and political pattern in each American state. A staff of experts tells that story in separate chapters. At the end of the volume the editor has gathered an entirely new and large set of statistical tables, the list of all 1944 Inter-American treaties, and comparative analyses of useful commercial data. This number appears to be easily the most valuable in the set to date. It should be in the library of everyone concerned with Inter-American relations.

W. EUGENE SHIELS

NO TIME FOR SILENCE. By Sylvia Lombroso, translated by Adrienne W. Foulke. Roy Publishers. \$2.50

THESE ARE SELECTED pages from the wartime diary of an Italian mother. As Jews, she and her family had to endure a double share of suffering through the war years; the present book, small and graciously written, is prompted by the conviction that now is no time for remaining silent about the existence of such racial cruelty in the world.

The real value of *No Time for Silence* is not in the facts which it narrates. Apart from the vivid account of the siege of Florence as experienced by the civilians within the city, it is but one more telling of the already sadly familiar tale of oppression, humiliation and brutality which has darkened our times. What makes the story new is the poignancy of a mother's suffering which pervades its pages. Its facts are but the background for the story of a heart's long pain. There are, indeed, passages where one feels that small facts have been somewhat adjusted, the better to accent the heart's pain. How authentically it is a mother's pain is best shown by a chapter which—at least to this reviewer's mind—transcends all the rest. Full of "hate that burned inside" and surrounded by German aviators who were fellow passengers on a Turin street car, this Jewish mother attempts to choose some single enemy face to hate—and in every one she finds her son, and is shaken to the core to find "I could no longer hate them, no longer find it possible to curse them."

Perhaps it is because the author is a mother that her longing for men to live again like brothers rings so true. In her earnest, even passionate, plans for the task of reconstruction, the reader will see into what a rich soil the Holy Father dropped his recent message on woman's place in the modern world, and hope that the author's Catholic and Christian sisters will be as responsive to the challenge and the duty which it outlined.

JOSEPH BLUETT

PETER BERGER, now teaching at the College of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, N. J., was Secretary of the Christian Social Party of Austria under the late Chancellor Msgr. Ignaz Seipel.

RICHARD PATTEE, head of the Latin-American Section of the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations from 1938 to 1943, has been spending the past several months in Puerto Rico.

COL. CONRAD H. LANZA will be well remembered by AMERICA readers for this weekly column of military analysis during the war.

REV. PATRICK T. QUINLAN is Director of the Rural Study Clubs at the headquarters of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference in Des Moines, Iowa.

THOMAS L. O'BRIEN, S.J., is completing his theological studies at Alma College, Alma, Calif.



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SWIMMING POOL - GYMNASIUM - HOCKEY - TENNIS

HAMLET. Since my truck with Shakespeare has occurred between bookcovers more often than across the proscenium, I can hardly qualify as a connoisseur of Hamlets. Of the four or five acting versions of the play I have seen, the Maurice Evans production, presented by Michael Todd in the Columbus Circle Theatre, is certainly the best. It is compact, colorful, emotionally stirring and intellectually satisfying; and for me a memorable experience.

There were times when Shakespeare, by trying very hard, could be a bore, and some of his tedious scenes are in his finest plays. While he was a superb artist he was also human, subject to the frailty of all flesh. He had his bilious periods, hours when he was tormented by dyspepsia, and days when his muse was drowsy and his mind refused to function. There are indications that he often wrote with tongue in cheek, to pleasure the groundlings because he liked to hear the clink of their farthings in the box-office till. His respect for popular taste, as suggested in *Hamlet*, was none too high; and he was inclined to be rather snooty toward the general public. He was not above writing bathos when he thought it good box-office.

In the Evans production the bathos has been pruned away, with the result that it is better box-office than the author ever dreamed of—and probably a better Hamlet too. All the dross is out, while the essential poetry remains, and if Elizabethan audiences ever had caught a glimpse of George Schaefer's staging, framed in Frederick Stover's sets, they would have thought they were in Heaven. Mr. Evans, in the title role, is magnificent.

BRIGHTEN THE CORNER. In this production, presented in the Lyceum by Jean Dalrymple, Charles Butterworth stars in a sprightly farce written by John Cecil Holm. The plot pivots on the efforts of a recently married couple to cadge a wedding check from the groom's uncle who visits them for a five-minute stopover between trains. When the uncle arrives, the recent bride happens to be out, and her girl friend and husband are alone in the apartment. Uncle thinks the girl is his nephew's wife, and girl and husband conspire to keep him under that impression during his brief stay. But uncle, after four minutes and forty-five seconds, decides to take an overnight rest. He has purchased a \$25,000 war bond for his nephew's first baby and wants them to get started on the baby. Some authors, handling that plot, would go to town delighting the sex trade with *double entendre* dialogue. But Mr. Holm managed to keep his script pure as spring water—well, it's only slightly polluted. Charles Butterworth, the fuddyyduddy uncle, is himself, which means he is a swell comedian. Lenore Lonergan, with her husky voice and wistful expression, is excellent as the pretended wife. Arthur O'Connell's direction and Willis Knighton's set rate a ruffle of applause.

DREAM GIRL, starring Betty Field, authored and directed by Elmer Rice, presented in The Coronet by The Playwrights' Company, reminds one of the man who enjoyed a Scotch vacation. He stayed home and let his mind wander. Mr. Rice's leading character, in day-dreams indulges in liaisons while remaining physically chaste. The acting is grand, with Evelyn Varden deserving special mention. Jo Mielziner, who designed the sets, rates equal billing with Miss Field. The play is sophisticated, with a Freudian overtone, but it will not offend the purity of anyone who can take some mildly suggestive situations in passing.

THEOPHILUS LEWIS

FILMS

MISS SUSIE SLAGLE'S. For some, the celluloid creation of Augusta Tucker's novel may not be all that it should be, however, even the most captious will find Lillian Gish's interpretation of the title role something to thrill over. There is so much humanity, so much warmth, so much downright charm in this delineation of a genteel boarding-house mistress, that Miss Gish makes Susie Slagle a person you will long remember. According to the story, circumstances caused this gracious lady to take medical students from a nearby university into her lovely home as paying guests, many years before, so in 1910, when we are introduced to the inmates, some of the young men prove to be sons of doctors who went through their training under the same roof, long, long ago. There are tragedy, comedy and a lot of hard work in the lives of these students, all of which are mounted against the personal dramas and unfolded in the tale. Sonny Tufts has the chief interest centered in his career as a not-so-young fellow with ambitions toward surgery, though he finds it almost impossible to overcome a fear of death. Joan Caulfield has the romantic role opposite him. Then there is the poignant bit about Pat Phelan, whose dreams of helping the sick in China, and of marrying Veronica Lake, a student nurse, end in tragedy. As the famous doctor's son who is under a handicap because of his father's brilliance, Bill Edwards has a touching interlude. These and a few more are the students who pass under a somewhat clinical inspection as their stories are unfolded. For some reason or other, many of the characters have been made to materialize in a manner that is not lifelike, and so, despite the many likable qualities of the film, it never achieves the artistic realism it aims for. The settings and costumes of a past era have been tastefully and carefully handled; there is definitely an atmosphere of another generation. Here is a quiet, dignified picture that is recommended to the whole family. (Paramount)

VACATION FROM MARRIAGE. American audiences are almost certain to find this British production about a stuffy husband and wife, transformed by their three years of service during the war, a rather dull record of this transition. Robert Donat and Deborah Kerr, in the leading parts, have been given thankless, repetitious roles; and Alexander Korda's direction never lifts the production out of its mediocre rut. After a stodgy clerk joins the Royal Navy and his mousy wife the Wrens, each improves immeasurably, has a new outlook on life and a new physique, and neither one likes the prospect of going back to a humdrum existence with a drab partner. Needless to say, a shock is in store for the pair when they meet, and the future takes on an unexpected brightness. *Adults* will find this a static, run-of-the-mill affair. (Alexander Korda-M.G.M.)

ROAD TO UTOPIA. I am inclined to wish that Paramount would run out of roads, for then they might finish off this series of would-be comedies starring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. The newest highway takes them over the bumps as confidence men, in a burlesque of the Forty-Niners. Overstuffed with gags, very few of which are funny or novel, the presentation is a mad farce that achieves vulgarity rather than humor, too often. Playing each other for a gold mine and a girl, the rivals, Bing and Bob, run into a series of misadventures in the frozen North. Even the Crosby-Hope fans will find their newest escapades disappointing and, besides, it is objectionable because of suggestive situations and a song. (Paramount) MARY SHERIDAN

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Publisher: Has anybody got any suggestions?

Reporter: How about getting something nobody else has—for example, the greatest year-in, year-out news story. The all-time greatest.

Publisher: What is it?

Reporter: I don't know. We'd have to find out.

Publisher (to Managing Editor): Joe, what you think?

M. E.: Might be something to it. The story that interests most races, most nations, the one with a universal appeal.

Pub. (to staff): Can anyone think of a story like that?

City Editor: How about the story of Christmas? I wouldn't be surprised if that qualified.

Pub.: Maybe we have something there. Anyway, we'll find out. Joe, wire all our foreign correspondents. Tell them what we want, and have them check on the Christmas story. (Eleven months later. The publisher and his staff are assembled in his office).

Pub.: The data is in on that greatest-world-story project we discussed last year. I've had a summary made. Joe, read the summary?

M. E.: Through North Africa, the Middle East, Asia, though these regions are predominantly Mohammedan or Buddhist, the story of the Christ Child is widely known and celebrated. Chinese, Koreans, Indians, Syrians, millions of them, accept and revere the story of Christmas. In the Pacific Isles, over vast stretches of Africa, multitudes of natives pay homage to the Christ Child. Esquimaux in Alaska bow respectfully before the Christmas Crib. Throughout Canada, the United States, Central and South America, throngs of men, women, children, year in and year out are deeply moved by the Christmas story.

Pub.: Joe, bring out that other factor we spoke of.

M. E.: Another factor the reports show is this: the story of Mohammed, the story of Buddha, the other stories have no worldwide interest. They have no influence in the Americas, in Europe, in many other regions, whereas the Christmas story wields deep influence even in the strongholds of Mohammed and Buddha.

Pub.: That's the thing that struck me. In many spots, nobody ever hears of Mohammed or Buddha, but there are very few spots, if any, that never heard of the Christ Child. He is in everywhere; in with the Chinese, in with the Indians, in with the Negroes. He has followers among the white, the yellow, the black, the red, the brown races. Nobody else has. It's the greatest news story, not merely of this year, but of all the years. The greatest news story of all time. We'll say it and from the data we got we'll prove it.

The Christmas story has such a universal appeal because it satisfies a deep yearning common to every man. . . . Things of earth can never still the clamors of the human heart, which is made for something transcending earth-bound products. . . . It is made for union with the Divine. . . . The Christmas story points the way to that union. . . . God became man that man might become god-like. . . . God by becoming man manifested the unselfishness that is Divine. . . . The unselfishness of the Christ Child begets unselfishness in man and, as selfishness decreases, joy and gladness and peace increase. . . . If the Christmas story in its fullest implications were put into action everywhere, there would appear peace on earth, peace between earth and Heaven.

JOHN A. TOOMEY

CORRESPONDENCE

SUDETEN EXPULSIONS

EDITOR: I was deeply moved by your courageous and sympathetic appeal entitled *Germany Must Have Relief*, in AMERICA of Nov. 10, 1945.

There was just one point in your article that surprised me. You speak of the guilt of Russia, Poland and Yugoslavia but fail to mention Czecho-Slovakia. It seems to me, however, that the way the Benes Government is treating the Sudeten Germans is even less excusable than the treatment the other countries are meting out to the German populations within their borders.

In the original plans of the 1919 peace conferences, the boundaries of the new Czech republic were so drawn as to exclude the Sudetenland. It was only when President Masaryk pleaded that his country needed that district for economic reasons, and when he had promised that Czecho-Slovakia would become a "super-Switzerland," that the Allies added the Sudetenland to the spoils of war. But the Prague Government never kept its promise. Czecho-Slovakia was never given a federal constitution, and the Sudetens, as the Slovaks, were never treated on a par with the Czech population.

The new Benes regime gives itself the appearance of being a democratic government, and public opinion in this country has generally been deceived as to its true nature. By a rigid system of censorship this regime has succeeded in keeping largely unnoticed the forceful expulsion of the Sudetens from their centuries-old homes. Despite the fact that the Big Three told Prague that evacuations had to be suspended until they could be carried out in an orderly and humane fashion, tens of thousands are pushed every day across the German border.

The complete destitution in which these more than three million Sudetens—practically all of them Catholics—are left, and their mass evacuation, are clear evidence that the spirit of totalitarianism reigns in Prague no less than in the rest of Eastern Europe.

What is most scandalous and seems most regrettable in this whole affair is the fact that our own Army assisted the Czechs in that evacuation. The people thus affected were not Nazis but rather those democratic Sudetens who, according to the testimony of the Czech Government in 1938, had supported Prague against the Nazis!

Princeton, N. J.

OTTO A. PIPER

DANBURY CATHOLIC BOOK SHELF

EDITOR: Father Gardiner, commenting on Catholic Book Week in AMERICA, November 3, posed a few interesting questions.

Undoubtedly AMERICA readers will be glad to know that for the past seven years we have had in operation in Danbury a plan to get the keys of Catholic books "into the hands of those who are fumbling at the lock." We scatter our keys around through the medium of the Catholic Book Shelf in the Danbury Public Library.

Briefly, the Book Shelf comprises some 1,500 volumes, given outright to the Public Library by the Catholic people of the community organized for this purpose as the Catholic Book Club of Danbury. The only stipulation is that the books so given be contained on a stack designated as the Catholic Book Shelf and be available for general circulation.

New titles are added at regular intervals, and there is a special section for a collection of well selected children's books.

Librarians handle these books in the same manner as other acquisitions. No fees are charged; the selection is large and varied Catholics and non-Catholics alike may use the Shelf. Thus we welcome all to examine concrete evidence that Catholic literature is a vital force, truly deserving of the Book Week slogan—"Keys to World Peace."

Many communities will find in a Book Shelf such as ours the solution to the problem of a better distribution of Catholic reading. Ingredients for success can be simply stated—proper direction, a little zeal, some hard work and a spirit of cooperation in the cause of Catholic Action.

We will be glad to forward to interested persons a more detailed review of the successful operation of the Book Shelf plan in Danbury, as well as exchange ideas with groups already sponsoring a shelf. Correspondence should be addressed to the Catholic Book Club, Knights of Columbus Home, Danbury, Connecticut.

Danbury, Conn.

STEPHEN A. COLLINS

RAILROAD SAFETY

EDITOR: Your editorial on *Railroad Safety* in the Dec. 1 issue of AMERICA should awaken all the country to the danger which rides the rails today. Especially during the reconversion period, when thousands upon thousands of servicemen will be returning to their homes via the railroads, should the nation demand safe travel *immediately*, without having to wait for red-tape committees to investigate. I urge AMERICA, very earnestly, to continue its crusade for safer railroad traffic.

New York, N. Y.

FRANK ARRICOLE

SOUND-PROOF CONFESSIONALS

EDITOR: Soon building materials will be available and the building of churches will begin again. There is one point to which I would like to call attention in laying out plans for the new churches.

In Stephens Point, Wis., to cite one example, there is a sound-proof room for hearing confessions. No sound escapes because the walls are thick. Is there any reason why all confessionals cannot be built this way? Then the priest and penitent can talk in an ordinary tone of voice. Penitents will tell you that an arrangement of this kind would save some real anguish.

It is not enough to use some partially deadening materials. Experience shows that in these circumstances you cannot converse in an ordinary tone. I remember one case in which \$250 had been spent on lining materials, etc., but the box still magnified the voice. In the new churches it would be easy to make the confessional into a heavily walled, sound-proof room. Work in hearing confessions would be helped tremendously.

Lawrence, Neb.

A PRIEST

NOTE TO OUR READERS: If any of our readers receive letters from Ramsey, Illinois, soliciting clothes, books, etc., we suggest that they communicate with the Catholic Pastor in Ramsey.

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THE WORD

LIVING IN A PAGAN WORLD, most of us do not get time to enjoy Christmas to the full. We get only one day off, and that day is so crowded with a variety of things that we have no leisure to think on the full meaning of the Feast or enjoy its endless beauty. Christmas is really too much for one day, so the Church continues the season for a long time. Christmas week is a week of very special Feasts, the Feast of Stephen, the first martyr, the Feast of the Apostle, Saint John, whose name will always be joined with love, the Feast of the Holy Innocents who became the first heroes of Christ and the first fruits of His coming. Catholic parents would be unfair to their children if they did not help them to enjoy the full flavor of this week.

Running through the whole season is a note of eagerness, eager joy, eager preparation for work to come. In the *Introit* of the Mass for the Sunday after Christmas, this spirit of eagerness is made to stand out in contrast with the deep silence of Christmas night: "When all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word, O Lord, leapt down from Thy royal throne."

"God sent His Son," Saint Paul tells us in the Epistle of the Mass, "... that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." His was an eagerness to give the best that even God can give. His was an eagerness to do a difficult task, eagerness for a hard life, a lonely life and violent death. No man ever faced a harder or more important task; and no man ever rushed to pleasure or acclaim or lofty place with half the eagerness with which Christ rushed to His work and His death for love for us.

It was not a leap into something unknown. He knew, as only God can know, how hard it would be, even how unappreciated it would be. "He is clothed with beauty," the *Introit* goes on. "The Lord is clothed with strength and hath girded Himself." Men gird for battle and for work; and Christ girded Himself both for work and for battle in our behalf, joyfully, eagerly.

Contrast this eagerness of Christ to give and to do with our unwillingness to receive, our apathy or indifference about the good things He wants to give. "As many as received Him," Saint John tells us, "to them He gave the power to become the sons of God"; but he was forced to say, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

Contrast His eager girding to work for us with our complaining about the little effort we must make to live holily and happily, the effort of perfect obedience, of daily Mass and Communion, of daily prayer, the effort to know and love Him, to fulfil those obligations that being sons of God imposes on us. "This child is set for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel." To receive from Christ, to work along with Christ for our own good is our resurrection. If we will neither receive nor work, His very eagerness to give becomes our condemnation.

The prayers of this Sunday's Mass are merely petitions that we may match the eagerness of Christ in giving and in doing. In the Collect, we ask God to "direct our actions according to Thy good pleasure, that we may abound in good works in the name of Thy Beloved Son." In the Secret we ask "the grace of a tender devotion," devotion to Christ and the things of Christ, "and the reward of a happy eternity," the very thing that Christ is so eager to give. In the Postcommunion we pray that "our just desires be satisfied," and only those desires are just which are of Christ. For them above all we must learn to be eager. JOHN P. DELANEY

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